

EXODUS 18

Written and compiled by Gary Kukis

Exodus 18:1–27 Moses' Father-in-law Recommends He Appoint Assistant Judges

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “**For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.**” (John 3:16–18). “**I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!**” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

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Links to the word-by-word, verse-by-verse studies of **Exodus** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) (that is what this document is). This incorporates 2 previous studies done in the book of Exodus. However, much of this material was thrown together without careful editing. Therefore, from time to time, there will be concepts and exegetical material which will be repeated, because there was no overall editing done once all of this material was combined.

There is a second, less complete set of weekly lessons of Exodus ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). Every word of that study can be found in this word-by-word, verse-by-verse study.

This study makes reference to a wide-range of sources. There are quotations from doctrinal teachers, of course; but from Catholic commentaries and from other sources as well. Wherever I found relevant truth, I quoted from it or was inspired by it. Even though it is clear that some churches have a better concept of our reason for being here, that does not mean that there is no truth to be found anywhere else. So, from time to time, I will quote from John Calvin, even though I do not subscribe to 5-point Calvinism; I will quote from some Catholic sources, even

though I believe that they are very wrong regarding Mary, the pope, apostolic succession and other such doctrines. The intention is for this to be the most thorough and accurate study of Exodus available anywhere.

Also, **it is not necessary that you read the grey Hebrew exegesis tables**. They are set apart from the rest of the study so that you can easily skip over them (based upon the suggestion of a friend). However, if you ever doubt the translation of a word, phrase or a verse, these translation tables are then available.

Preface: Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, hears that Moses is nearby. Jethro brings Moses' wife and two sons to him, but also stays long enough to hear of the exploits of Y^ehowah. He also recommends to Moses some changes in the judicial system that Moses established.

The Bible Summary of Exodus 18 (in 140 characters or less): *Moses' father-in-law Jethro came and offered sacrifices to God. He suggested that Moses appoint leaders to help him judge the people.*¹

There are many **chapter commentaries** on the book of Exodus. This will be the most extensive examination of Exodus 18, where you will be able to examine in depth every word of the original text. Every attempt has been made to make this both a complete and self-contained study. Therefore, all references, vocabulary, and related concepts should be found within this extensive study. Easy access links to more in-depth studies of some vocabulary words, concepts and doctrines are also provided.

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Outline of Chapter 18:

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vv. 7–12	Fellowship between Moses and his father-in-law
vv. 13–16	Jethro observes Moses daily grind
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Introduction	Titles and/or Brief Descriptions of Exodus 18 (by various commentators)
Introduction	Brief, but insightful observations of Exodus 18 (various commentators)
Introduction	Fundamental Questions About Exodus 18
Introduction	The Prequel of Exodus 18
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Introduction	The Principals of Exodus 18
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¹ From <http://www.biblesummary.info/exodus> accessed October 5, 2023.

Introduction	Timeline for Exodus 18
Introduction	A Synopsis of Exodus 18
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www.kukis.org	Exodus folder	Exegetical Studies in Exodus

Doctrines Covered or Alluded To			
Additional doctrines and links are found in Definition of Terms below.			

Chapters of the Bible Alluded To and/or Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter			
	Exodus 2		

Many who read and study this chapter are 1st or 2nd generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. Also, I have developed a few new terms and concepts which require definition as well. In addition, there are other more traditional yet technical theological terms which will be used and therefore defined as well.

These terms are double-linked to the first occurrence of each term in this document. The term on the left links to its first use in the document; and that links back to its definition.

Sometimes the terms in the exegesis of this chapter are simply alluded to, without any in-depth explanation of them. Sometimes, these terms are explained in detail and illustrated. A collection of all these terms is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). Often, the terms below are linked to complete doctrines.

Definition of Terms	
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob	<p>Every person with the genes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is considered to be a racial Jew. Abraham is considered to be the first Jew; and God made many promises to Abraham, most of which applied to the people who would come from him.</p> <p>Abraham had two sons—Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael is a gentile (an Arab) and Isaac is a Jew (Hebrew). Isaac had twin sons: Jacob and Esau. Esau is a gentile (an Arab) while Jacob is a Jew. Technically, everyone descended from Jacob is a Jew.</p> <p>The key is regeneration and foreknowledge. Many believe that Ishmael and Esau were both unbelievers. I disagree; I believe that both men believed in the Revealed God. However, they simply did not consistently pass down the heritage of that faith to their sons and grandsons. Despite their many failings, Jacob and his 12 sons consistently passed down this spiritual heritage. God knew who would and who would not.</p>
Age of Israel	<p>The Age of Israel is the period of time in history where God works through believers in nation Israel. God also worked through the Abraham and those descended from him until nation Israel was established. See the Three Dispensations: The Age of Israel, the Age of the Hypostatic Union and the Church Age (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).</p>
Canaan, the Land of Promise	<p>Canaan is the land promised by God to Israel on a number of occasions. It is named <i>Canaan</i> after the <i>Canaanites</i> who live there. In modern terms, this would be the land between Egypt and Lebanon (roughly).</p>

Definition of Terms	
(The) Church ; Local Church	The church has several different meanings today: (1) Most often, today, we understand <i>church</i> to refer to a local church that we attend. (2) At the beginning of the Church Age, this word referred to a gathering or assembly of people; their racial and gender specifics were irrelevant to their position in Christ. (3) The <i>church universal</i> refers to all of the believers (this could be all of the believers alive on earth right now or all of the believers who have lived throughout the Church Age). Grace notes "Church, the Body of Christ" (HTML) (PDF); Doctrine.org (The Church—the Body of Christ); Word of Truth Ministries (Church); Grace Bible Church of Baytown (The Church);
Circumcision, Circumcise, Circumcised	Circumcision is the physical act of the removal of some skin around the head of the phallus. This usually takes place when a child is 7 or 10 days old. For the Jews, this represented the new birth or regeneration. It represented that person being set apart to God. There is no such thing as female circumcision in the Bible. Often, when a person is called circumcised, this is a synonym for being Jewish. See the doctrine of circumcision (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). Also, Grace Notes on Circumcision (HTML) (PDF); Jack Ballinger on Circumcision ; Grace Bible Church of Baytown on Circumcision ; L. G. Merritt on Circumcision .
Desert- wilderness	I believe that the landscape of Israel and the regions around it have changed dramatically over the millennia. The many references to <i>desert</i> or <i>desert region</i> in the Bible refer to unpopulated areas. Some of these areas, due to a change in weather patterns, have become deserts. However, they were not all deserts during Bible times. Therefore, I refer to such an area as a desert-wilderness.
Divine Establishment	Also known as the <i>laws of divine establishment</i> . These are laws which are devised by God for the human race (for believers and unbelievers alike). The more aligned a country is with these laws, the greater freedom and prosperity that country will enjoy. Furthermore, there will be greater evangelism and Bible teaching which takes place. The further a country strays from these law results in greater tyranny and unhappiness among its population. See the Laws of Divine Establishment (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Divine Viewpoint	Divine viewpoint is how God thinks. This is very different than how man thinks. The Lord says, "My thoughts are not like yours. Your ways are not like mine. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:8–9; ERV) See Human Viewpoint Versus Divine Viewpoint Thinking (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
The Essence of God	The essence of God is the invisible nature of God. He is perfect righteousness, perfect justice, eternal life, love, omnipotent, omnipresent, all-knowing, immutable. See Grace Notes Essence of God (HTML) (PDF); Got Questions (Omnipotence).
The Exodus	The word <i>exodus</i> describes the time when Israel left Egypt. They had been slaves in Egypt for 400 years; and God called them out of Egypt and would give them the Ten Commandments in the Sinai desert soon thereafter.
The Exodus Generation	The Exodus generation is actually two generations of Israelites. Those who walked out of Egypt as adults (aged 20 and older) make up the older generation, whom I refer to as <i>Gen X</i> (ultimately they will be failures and die the sin unto death in the desert-wilderness). The younger generation is the <i>generation of promise</i> . They are either born in the desert-wilderness or they walked out of Egypt as children (aged 20 or younger). These men will walk into the land under the command of Joshua and take it. Often, the <i>Exodus generation</i> refers only to that older generation, <i>Gen X</i> .

Definition of Terms	
Fellowship (with God)	Fellowship means that we enjoy a current, active relationship with God. This is a real state of being; but it does not mean that we feel it. We lose fellowship with God by sinning; and we regain that fellowship by naming our sins to God (also known as, <i>rebound</i> ; as explained in 1John 1:9). R. B. Thieme, Jr. called the naming of your sins and the resultant restoration to fellowship as <i>rebound</i> . See <i>Rebound and Keep Moving!</i> (R. B. Thieme, Jr.) <i>Rebound</i> (Kukis).
God's Plan, the Plan of God; His plan	God's plan is essentially the divine decree (s). God has a plan for the human race, for Jesus Christ His Son, and for all of those on this planet who believe in Him. Often this plan includes the actions of unbelievers, foreknown by God, but not foreordained. See Grace Notes' Plan of God (HTML —Bolender) (PDF —Bolender); L. G. Merritt (The Plan of God); Joe Griffin (God Exists: Navigating the Web of Truth); Don Samdahl (Summary of the Plan of God); R. B. Thieme, Jr. (The Plan of God).
Grace Oriented Believer, The	This is the understanding of the believer that our lives depend upon the graciousness of God, and not upon our own efforts and works. Our spiritual growth is a result of grace, our production is a result of grace, and, quite obviously, our salvation is the result of grace. At no point can we, as individuals, take credit for what God has done for us and in our lives. See the Doctrine of Grace Orientation (Ron Adema) (Robert Dean) (Rick Hughes—audio) (Robert McLaughlin) (Utilization of Grace Orientation) (R. B. Thieme, Jr. as one of the problem solving devices)
Hypostatic Union	<p>In the person of Jesus Christ since His physical birth [incarnation], there are two natures, undiminished deity and true humanity in one person forever. These two natures—human and divine—remain distinct and are inseparably united without mixture or loss of identity, without loss or transfer of attributes. This means that the Lord Jesus Christ is just as much God as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit and at the same time He is also just as much human as you and I. He is undiminished deity and true humanity in one person forever. This union is known as the hypostatic union.</p> <p>For more information: Got questions? on the Hypostatic Union; Theopedia on the Hypostatic Union; VersebyVerse.org: the Doctrine of the Hypostatic Union and Kenosis; Robert R. McLaughlin on the Doctrine of Hypostatic Union. My post on the Hypostatic Union primarily comes from the Maranatha Church (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).</p>
Israel	Israel can refer to a number of different things: (1) <i>Israel</i> is the name given to Jacob; and sometimes, these two names contrast his character and spiritual growth. (2) <i>Israel</i> can refer to the people descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (3) <i>Israel</i> can refer to the nation made up of the people descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (4) <i>Israel</i> can refer specifically to the northern kingdom, after the nation under Solomon split into a northern and southern nation (the southern nation being called <i>Judah</i>). Context determines which thing is meant.
The Law of Moses, The Law	<p>The Mosaic Law (often referred to as <i>the Law</i>) is the Law which God gave orally to Moses, which Moses wrote down. It is found at the beginning of Exodus 20 and continues through the book of Numbers (with some narrative integrated into the text of the Law). The book of Deuteronomy summarizes and reviews much of the Mosaic Law and adds in some additional applications (Deuteronomy is actually a series of sermons given by Moses to the people of Israel—Moses himself wrote these sermons).</p> <p>Often the words <i>the Law</i> refer back to the books specifically written by Moses (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). See also (the Spokane Bible Church on the Mosaic Law.) (Maranatha Church on the Mosaic Law).</p>

Definition of Terms	
The Mosaic Law; the Law of God	<p>The Mosaic Law is the Law which God gave orally to Moses, which Moses wrote down. It is found at the beginning of Exodus 20 and continues through the book of Numbers (with some narrative integrated into the text of the Law). The book of Deuteronomy summarizes and reviews much of the Mosaic Law and adds in some additional applications (Deuteronomy is actually a series of sermons given by Moses to the people of Israel—Moses himself wrote these sermons).</p> <p>Often the words <i>the Law</i> refer back to the books specifically written by Moses (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). See also (the Spokane Bible Church on the Mosaic Law.) (Maranatha Church on the Mosaic Law); Grace Notes.</p>
Passover	<p>The Passover is a ritual observed by the Hebrew people, going back to the period of time that God, through Moses, led them out of Israel. For the first Passover, the people had to put blood on the header and side doorposts so that their firstborn would not be taken. See the Passover: (HTML) (PDF) (WPD); Grace Notes (HTML) (PDF); Grace Doctrine 7 Feasts of Israel; Maranatha Church Doctrine of the Passover.</p>
Pentateuch	<p>The Pentateuch is comprised of the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), incorrectly called the first five books of Moses (as Moses did not write Genesis).</p>
Pre-tabernacle	<p>Prior to the building of the Tabernacle, there appears to have been a tent where Moses would go to speak with God (it is also called the <i>Tent of Meeting</i>). This would have been the tent that Moses moved outside of the camp when the people sinned against God with the golden calf. This tent probably existed when Moses and Aaron announced the judgments to Pharaoh of Egypt.</p>
Priest	<p>Priests represent man before God (whereas, a prophet represents God to man). They offered up animal sacrifices to God on behalf of men.</p> <p>In the Church Age, every believer is a priest and there is no specialized priesthood. Every priest-believer can represent himself directly to God. See the Priesthoods of God and of Man: (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).</p>
The Revealed God (or, the Revealed Lord)	<p>Throughout human history, God has revealed Himself in a number of ways. Before the incarnation, when anyone believed in this revelation of God, he was saved (Genesis 15:6). When Jesus was born, God revealed Himself in Jesus (Hebrews 1:1–2); and we are now saved by believing in Jesus.</p> <p>We all come to a time of God-consciousness where we understand the concept and possibility of the existence of God. At that point, we face 2 great questions: (1) do we want to know this God and (2) are will willing to believe in God as He has revealed Himself or do we make a god in our own image and worship that? In both the Old and New Testaments, God will make Himself known (He reveals Himself) to those who will believe in Him and to others as well. We know Him firmly and concretely as Jesus Christ; and in the Old Testament, He is known as the God of the Jews, the Creator of the Universe, the God of Moses (or of Abraham), etc.</p>

Definition of Terms	
The Sabbath	The Sabbath Day is Saturday, and this was a day of rest for the Hebrew people, during which they would not work but contemplate the finished work of God. This became a repository of legalism over the years, where this day became more and more tightly regulated with new laws and regulations not found in Scripture. Believers in the Church Age are not under any Sabbath day restrictions. (Spokane Bible Church Sabbath Summary) (Grace Notes: Jewish Teaching on the Sabbath) Kukis—Doctrine of the Sabbath Day (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Septuagint, LXX	The Septuagint was the Greek translation made from the Old Testament sometime between 300–100 B.C. It is often called the LXX, because 70 translators were said to be employed in this task. This is the translated most often quoted by the Apostles.
Signs and Wonders; Signs and Miracles	These are unusual and observable acts which take place, often involving a change of one thing into another. God primarily employs signs and wonders during history-changing events (such as, the removal of Israel from Egypt, the incarnation of Jesus Christ, or the establishment of the Church Age). Most believers in the Church Age will never see any signs and wonders. See the Doctrine of Signs, Miracles and Healings (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Spiritual Growth	Spiritual growth for the believer is an option. We do not automatically grow spiritually simply because we have believed in Jesus Christ. We grow because we spend time in the Spirit (using rebound) and because we learn Bible doctrine under the ministry of a well-qualified pastor-teacher. See Living the Christian Life (HTML) (PDF) (WPD); Christian Mechanics (HTML) (PDF) (WPD), the Stages of Spiritual Growth (HTML) (PDF) (WPD); and the Spiritual Life (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Spiritual Life , Spiritual Lives	The spiritual life is the life that God expects us to lead. Fundamental to the spiritual life is rebound (naming your sins to God and being filled with the Spirit) and spiritual growth (learning and believing Bible doctrine). Even though we are commanded to live the spiritual life, this is not an imposition to our lives, but enlightenment and peace of mind. The unbeliever cannot lead a spiritual life. (HTM) (PDF) (The Spiritual Life via the 10 problem solving devices —R. B. Thieme, Jr.) (Walking in the Spirit —Chafer) (Spiritual Metabolism —Robert R. McLaughlin)
Spiritual Maturity	Spiritual maturity is achieved through spiritual growth. One grows spiritually by using the rebound technique (1John 1:9) and by hearing, understanding and believing the teaching of the Word of God (aka, Operation Z). R. B. Thieme, Jr. has coined several terms which mean roughly the same thing: the edification complex structure of the soul and supergrace. See Christian Mechanics (HTML) (PDF) (WPD), the Stages of Spiritual Growth (HTML) (PDF) (WPD); and the Doctrine of the Edification Complex of the Soul (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
The Tongues Movement	The Tongues Movement is a reference to the charismatic movement where their focus is upon <i>the second blessing</i> , the second chapter of Acts and the sign gifts of the 1 st century. This is a confused movement by emotional Christians who center around the gift a tongues, a gift which has not be legitimately used since A.D. 70. See the Gift of Tongues (HTML) (PDF) (WPD), Grace Notes Speaking In Tongues (HTML) (PDF), Merritt, Grace Fellowship Church (spiritual gifts) , Jack Ballinger (Tongues) , Doctrine.org (Sign Gifts: Valid Today?), Word of Truth Ministries (spiritual gifts), order from R. B. Thieme, Jr. , Grace Bible Church (Pre-canon Gift: Tongues).

Definition of Terms	
Type, Typical, Antitype, Typology, Typological	A type is a person, a thing or an act which looks forward to Jesus or to Jesus on the cross. For instance, Isaac's birth was the <i>type</i> ; our Lord's birth was the <i>antitype</i> , which was the fulfillment of the type. <i>Typical</i> is the adjective; and <i>typology</i> is the study of type. <i>Typological</i> , an adjective, is, <i>of or relating to typology or types</i> . See Typology (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Some of these definitions are taken from http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/ http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/terms-and-definitions/ http://www.theopedia.com/	

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

An Introduction to Exodus 18

Introduction: Exodus 18 is a marvelous chapter which brings Moses' father-in-law back into the picture and allows us to see from where Moses received a great deal of his spiritual training. Moses left Egypt originally around age 40, having murdered an Egyptian slavedriver. He lived in Midian for about 40 years, attaching himself to this Midianite family, having married one of the daughters. The head of the family is a priest, and we should assume **spiritual growth** taking place in Moses over the next 40 years. Moses left Egypt because he killed a man; but he will return 40 years later as God's man.

Given that Moses' father-in-law is a **priest**, let me suggest that there was spiritual growth experienced by Moses over those 40 years in Midian due to his personal contact with his father-in-law. Moses was extensively trained in Egypt for 40 years and because he is God's man for the **exodus**, it is reasonable to assume that he experienced spiritual growth in Midian over the next 40 years.

At the time of the book of Exodus, Moses would be a little over 80 years old. However, we do not really know the age of his father-in-law. He may even be younger than Moses.

Because Moses' father-in-law has come on the scene, we find out what happened to Moses' wife and children. Apparently when Moses had his wife **circumcise** one of his young adult sons, that she got pissed off and made a scene (Exodus 4:25–26). We do not hear from her until now because either Moses sent her back to her father or she grabbed up her children and deserted Moses in Exodus 4 or soon thereafter. Her reaction in any case reveals that she did not support Moses or the **plan of God** for his life. She was certainly not on board with what God had for Moses to do, given that she was against **circumcision**.

This right here is another pertinent lesson from the books of Moses written 3500 years ago—do not marry someone who is spiritually immature or who is not saved. Moses grew spiritually when he stayed with his new family. It is likely that this spiritual growth took place at the hand of his father-in-law, who was a priest. It would be logical that his wife would have also experienced some spiritual growth at the hand of her father, but she apparently had not. Because she did not, she either deserted Moses or Moses had to send her away when things began to get intense in Egypt. In any case, Moses did not have the support of a wife during the most important crossroads of his life. Why? Because he had not chosen a wife carefully (this is conjecture based upon the few times we encounter her in Scripture). She was probably very beautiful with a great personality, but she was lacking in spiritual depth.

God has a plan for all of our lives—males and females both. If we choose to spend our lives with a spiritual moron, we have immediately compromised our service to God. We lose out on innumerable blessings in time and in eternity based upon this one poor choice. We may go through our entire life feeling that we have missed something or we are missing something. A tremendous feeling of a lack of fulfillment, of ennui. Even if we want to choose activities which are honoring to God, and even if we choose a course of action which is in God's plan for our lives, there will always be this anvil attached to our leg impeding our spiritual progress (I am not advocating divorce by saying these things).

If you have already made this choice and realize what a horrible mistake you have made, then you must do as Peter suggests: *In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives* (1Peter 3:1). Although there is no corresponding verse for the husbands, the counterpart is obvious: *In the same way, you husbands, love your wives even as Christ loved the church, that they might be won without a word by the behavior of their husbands*. This is choice #1. Choice #2 is what happened to Moses, the details of which we are not privy to. In any case, by v. 2, we will have a fairly good idea as to what happened.

What we will find out in this chapter is, despite Moses' excellent leadership of the Hebrew people, acting as a go-between God and the people, his administration was not perfect. He needed to actually work less and oversee more. Moses did not realize this, but his father-in-law saw it immediately. In this chapter, Moses' father-in-law will help him set up a more effective and efficient administrative system. Moses was judging all of the disputes and problems of two million people; and Jethro (his father-in-law) said, "You can't be doing all of this. You need to delegate, son."

Moses is humble enough to listen to Jethro and the system of justice in **Israel** improved because Moses worked less and delegated more. Although this seems like a pretty simple concept, it took a third party, whom Moses respected, to make these necessary changes. Because Moses is humble, he will listen to his father-in-law.

We, as believers, ought to be open to reasonable suggestions from others, no matter who they might be. When I first began writing commentary, a good friend of mine made negative remarks about the way I was doing the Greek and Hebrew. For every single verse, I would talk about the original language words and their morphology (much the way that R. B. Thieme, Jr. would teach in the 1970s and 1980s). As a result of Alex's criticism, I began to place all of the Greek and Hebrew into tables—tables which could be easily skipped over by those who did not want to hear anything about the Greek or Hebrew. Now, I will mention a few Greek and Hebrew words, but not constantly; and I do not name all of them in the explanatory text. That information is left in tables (in the **chapter studies**), and a person can refer to them or skip them over entirely. This change would have never happened if it wasn't for this person's suggestion. Oh, and as an interesting additional fact about this person, he was a holy roller. So it would have been easy for me to completely and totally ignore anything that he had to say; but I heard him, he was right, and I made the changes necessary to reflect the fact that not every person wants to read about the Greek and Hebrew in every paragraph.

Anyway, here, in the middle of the book of Exodus, Moses is taught by his father-in-law how to organize and how to delegate. This suggestion is going to keep Moses from working himself to death.

Exodus 18 is about Moses and his father-in-law (Moses' wife will barely be mentioned). Very importantly, Moses will hear and take the advice of his father-in-law. This reveals that Moses is truly an humble person. Often, we learn from the Word of God; but there are also times when very practical lessons come to us from individuals whom God places before us. Moses took direction directly from God. Moses could have arrogantly responded to his father-in-law, saying, "Listen, if God wants me to change things up, then let Him tell me that."

There are at least two other things that will come out of this chapter:

1. Jethro will very much parallel Melchizedek (making Jethro a **type** of Christ).

2. Disputes among the Israelites will be handled in an organized and civilized manner. In the previous chapter, Amalek did not like Israel coming through that particular region. Well, there were no plans for Israel to remain in that region. Even though it may not have been clear to Moses exactly why God was leading them where He was leading them, he was also aware that the eventual destination was **Canaan**, as this had been promised to Israel. Therefore, if Amalek was guarding its own territory, they really had nothing to worry about. This could have been handled without a battle (and this battle set the stage for the relationship between Israel and Amalek until the time that Amalek was finally wiped out²).

In vv. 1–4, we get some background information. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, hears about what has gone on in Egypt and that his son-in-law, Moses, is not too far from Midian. With Jethro are Moses' wife and two children (who could be young adults at this time).

In vv. 5–7 Jethro comes toward Moses with his wife and two children, sending messengers to Moses first. Having gotten this message, Moses comes out to meet his father-in-law.

In vv. 8–12, Moses shares all of the things which God has done for Israel, which Jethro appreciates and then offers up a burnt sacrifice.

For the rest of the chapter, vv. 13–27, Jethro observes his son-in-law at work, and makes a very valuable and practical suggestion to him.

There are several things to bear in mind as we begin this chapter.

Preparatory Points for Exodus 18 (Moses and his Wife)

1. At some point, Moses' wife returned to her father, taking her children with her. This may have happened soon after she was required to circumcise her second son. We are not given any details of her return—not the timing, the manner, or the lead up to it. We are told in v. 2 that Moses sent them back home, but the prelude to this might be a series of marital arguments very similar to what we find when Moses' wife had to circumcise her second son. Let me suggest that there was marital discord very much related to what Moses was doing. However, we cannot discount the idea that Moses simply sent his wife home in order to protect her and their sons.
2. What happened between Israel and Egypt is being broadcast far and wide in the ancient world. People all over this part of the world are finding out about it.
3. Moses, as he leads Israel, is moving closer to Midian, where he spent the previous 40 years.
4. No doubt, Moses' Midianite family would be aware of all this taking place; and no doubt, his father-in-law is anxious to see Moses again.
5. Like most fathers-in-law, Jethro would want to see the best done by his grandsons, which would be a unification of their family once again.
6. Just as before, Moses' will have a close relationship with his father-in-law; but apparently not the same close relationship with his wife. I say this based upon the fact that she and their sons are not mentioned again in Moses' writings.

We are given some basic information about Moses' marriage, but there is so much to speculate about. Although there is some speculation in the doctrine above, most of these points are reasonable approaches to this particular topic.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

² I do not recall what end Amalek; just that, after a point in time, they were no longer a people.

Jethro's Advice (title heading from e-sword for this chapter)

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Brief, but insightful observations of Exodus 18 (various commentators)

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Fundamental Questions About Exodus 18

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The Prequel of Exodus 18

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The Principals of Exodus 18

Commentary

The Principals of Exodus 18

Characters		Commentary	

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

We need to know where this chapter takes place.

The Places of Exodus 18

Place	Description

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

By the Numbers

Item	Duration; size

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Timeline for Exodus 18

Legend	
Birth or death	God speaks with Abraham
Historical incidents (most of which are related to Abraham)	

Parentetical dates (2065 B.C.) simply refer to taking the date assigned by the chronologist and using Scripture to determine the next date.

The entire **Abrahamic Timeline** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The entire **Patriarchal Timeline** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Much of the commentary on the far right came from others' works (like Brent MacDonald).

Brent MacDonald	Steve Rudd	Age of Moses	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
1805 B.C.	1806 B.C.		1606 B.C.	Gen. 50:26 Exodus 6:1	Joseph dies at age 110
			1625 B.C. (1620 B.C.)	Num. 26:58	Birth of Amram (Levi's grandson, Moses' father).
			1590 B.C. (1584 B.C.)		The death of Levi (age 137)
Reese occasionally supplies 2 dates in his Chronological Bible; the first is his and the second is Klassen's.					
			1606–1462 B.C.	Gen. 47:27 Exodus 1:7	From the Patriarchs to the Exodus.
1783 B.C.	1656 B.C.				Hyksos begin ruling in Egypt (Semite kings).
	1556 B.C.				Defeat of Hyksos dynasty
1570 B.C.	1557–1532 B.C.				Ahmosé reign (wife Nefertiri); beginning of the 18 th Dynasty in Egypt.
1546 B.C.	1532–1511 B.C.				Amuntotep reign
			1580 B.C. (1542 B.C.)	Exodus 1:8–14	Egyptian bondage and oppression increases.
	1526 B.C.				Amuntotep kills children
1522 B.C.	1526 B.C.	0		Exodus 2:2	Birth of Moses
1522 B.C.	1526 B.C.			Exodus 2:5	Hatshepsut, age 15, adopts baby Moses.
1526 B.C.	1511–1498 B.C.				Thutmose I reign (wife Ahmosé)
1514 B.C.	1498–1485 B.C.				Thutmose II – Hatshepsut (his half-sister and co-ruler) Pharaohs of Oppression
1504 B.C.					Hatshepsut continues reign with Thutmose III
	1466 B.C.			Num. 11:29 Ex. 33:11	Birth of Joshua

Brent MacDonald	Steve Rudd	Age of Moses	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
1482 B.C.				Exodus 2:11-15 Acts 7:23	Moses flees to Midian to escape the wrath of Thutmose III. Pharaoh Thutmose III now rules Egypt alone, subsequently destroying most traces of Hatshepsut.
1450 B.C.					Egypt - Pharaoh Amenhotep II (alt. Amenophis II). He was not the oldest son of Thutmose III. Bloodthirsty; liked hand to hand combat, led troops into battle with howls of rage.
1446 B.C.				Ex. 4:18-5:1 1Kings 6:1	Egypt - Moses returns and confronts Amenhotep II.
1446 B.C.	1446 B.C.			Ex. 12:40-41	Moses leads people out of Egypt; the beginning of the exodus. note 3 . Scripture does not state that Pharaoh was killed at this time (read about it here).
					Sinai (Marah, Elim, Rephidim, Mount Sinai, etc.) - Israel in wilderness 40 years (Exodus 16:35). A timeline of stops on the Exodus is here .
1424 B.C.					Egypt - Pharaoh Thutmose IV (alt. Tuthmosis IV) reigns, son of Amenhotep II and lesser wife Tiaa. He was not the oldest son. Had dream at the sphinx that he would rule - recorded on stele there.
1414 B.C.					Egypt - Pharaoh Amenhotep III (alt. Amenophis III). The colossi of Memnon are all that remains of his temple near Thebes.

Brent MacDonald	Steve Rudd	Age of Moses	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
1402 B.C.				Deut. 1:1, 5	Israel - Moses writes and teaches the book of Deuteronomy in land of Moab.
1402 B.C.		120		Deut. 34:7	Moses dies at Mount Nebo at 120 years old
	1406 B.C.				Joshua crosses Jordan River.
1401 B.C.					Israel - Conquests of Joshua in Promised Land begin. Battle of Jericho.

Bibliography

MacDonald's timeline is from: <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63.htm> accessed January 29, 2016.

See <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63dating.htm> for his justification of his timeline.

Steve Rudd from <http://www.bible.ca/archeology/bible-archeology-exodus-route-date-1440bc.jpg> accessed January 29, 2016.

The Reese Chronological Bible; KJV translation; Editor: Edward Reese; ©1977 by Edward Reese and Klassen's dating system ©1975 by Frank R. Klassen; ©1980 by Bethany House Publishers, South Minneapolis, MN; pp. 18–19, 54–74.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Here is what to expect from Exodus 18:

A Synopsis of Exodus 18

Like all chapters of the Word of God, you need more than just the simple plot outline to understand what God wants us to know.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Outlines of Exodus 18 (Various Commentators)

Outlines of Exodus 18 (Various Commentators)

[Chapter Outline](#)

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A Synopsis of Exodus 18 from the Summarized Bible

Contents:	Moses joined by his wife and children. Judges selected to solve the problems of the people.
Characters:	God, Moses, Aaron, Jethro, Zipporah, Gershom, Eliezer.
Conclusion:	Telling of God's wondrous works is good to the use of edifying What we have the joy of, let God have the praise of, thereby confirming others to faith and encouraging them to real worship.
Key Word:	Told, Exodus 18:8 (testimony).
Strong Verses:	Exodus 18:8, Exodus 18:9, Exodus 18:10.
Striking Facts:	It will be noticed (Numbers 11:14-17) that God ignored Jethro's counsel and his man-made organization, putting in its place, His own order (Exodus 18:18). We are not called to service on the ground of our ability, but Christ's ability. Philippians. 4:13.

Keith L. Brooks, *Summarized Bible; Complete Summary of the Bible*; ©1919; from e-Sword, Ex. 18.

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It is helpful to see what came before and what follows in a brief summary.

The Big Picture (Exodus 17–20)

Chapter	Text/Commentary
17	<p>God provides the children of Israel water from a rock (first instance of this).</p> <p>The Amalekites come out to fight against the Israelites. In this battle, when Moses raises his arms, the battle goes in favor of the Israelites; when he lowers them, the battle goes against them.</p>
18	<p>Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, comes to visit him in the desert-wilderness. He brings along with him Moses' wife and their two children (they apparently returned to Midian at some point).</p> <p>Jethro rejoices when he hears all that God did on behalf of Israel.</p> <p>Jethro suggests that Moses delegate some of his responsibilities to lower-level judges.</p>
19	<p>The sons of Israel come to Mount Sinai and Moses calls for the people to cleanse themselves and to separate themselves from Mount Sinai. They were not to even touch it.</p> <p>God makes himself visibly and audibly known on Mount Sinai.</p>

The Big Picture (Exodus 17–20)

Chapter	Text/Commentary
20	<p>God speaks the Ten Commandments to all the people of Israel; and it really shakes them up. They ask Moses to speak to God directly and then to tell them what God says. They do not want to hear God speaking directly to them.</p> <p>The people pull back away from the mountain, and Moses goes towards the mountain to the thick darkness where God is. God speaks to Moses about idols and altars (which appears to continue into Exodus 21–23 for other topics).</p>

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Changes—additions and subtractions (for Exodus 18): Very often, when I begin a new chapter, I have either discovered a new translations, a new commentary; or have decided to leave out a particular translation or commentary. Sometimes, I make a minor formatting change. I have always placed such comments before the beginning of the first verse. So one formatting change is, *the addition of this more formal approach to changes, giving it a section of its own*. Many times, if I like a change a lot, I will occasionally go back and make that change in previous chapters.

The recurring set of chapter links and Exodus links has been updated.

Previously in the weekly study of Genesis, I used the Modern KJV translation (this is the second set of original notes placed in the chapter-by-chapter study of Genesis). For the book of Exodus, I will use the New King James Version (unless otherwise noted), which is a superior (but not perfect) translation. Therefore, an unnamed translation of Exodus will either be the NKJV or it will be one of the three original translations developed for each chapter.

I have gone back in the Exodus series and made certain that, after every verse, there is a mostly literal translation of that verse. At the end of every passage, there will be both a mostly literal translation and a paraphrase provided, both clearly marked and original with me.

The Doctrinal Dictionary now allows you to go back and forth between the first occurrence of a specific term and the dictionary where its definition is found (they will be cross-linked).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Moses' father-in-law and estranged wife travel to visit Moses

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

As always, 3 separate translations will be produced for each verse. The slavishly literal translation attempts to preserve word order and number, making it more literal than Young's translation (however, I do not preserve the consistency of the translation that Young does). The moderately literal translation may add or delete a definite article, change the number of a noun to correspond with the English sense of thinking, and the order is often

changed in order to better represent our English sentence structure. The paraphrase is an attempt to give a thought-for-thought interpretation of what each verse tells us.

Kukis slavishly literal:

And so hears Jethro, a priest of Midian, a father-in-law of Moses, of all that had done Elohim for Moses and for Israel His people, for brought out Y^ehowah Israel from Egypt.

Exodus
18:1

Kukis moderately literal:

Jethro, Moses's father-in-law and a priest of Midian, heard all that Elohim had done for Moses and for His people Israel, for [he heard that] Y^ehowah brought Israel out of Egypt.

Kukis not-so-literal paraphrase:

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law who was also a priest in Midian, heard all about what God had done through Moses and for His people Israel. He heard that Jehovah brought the people of Israel out of Egypt.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac (= Aramaic) and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation³; George Lamsa's translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton's translation as revised and edited by Paul W. Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou*, etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible instead of Brenton's translation, because it updates the English text.

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton's (or the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong's numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament. Although I usually quote the Complete Apostles' Bible here, I have begun to make changes in the translation when their translation conflicts with the Greek and note what those changes are.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

³ I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use www.latinvulgate.com.

The comparisons which I do are primarily between the English translations which are taken from the ancient tongues. For the most part, the variances are so minor that I rarely investigate them any further than that.

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

I will only list the translation from the Dead Sea Scrolls if it exists and if it is different from the Masoretic text.

The Targum of Onkelos is actually the Pentateuchal Targumim, which are The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel. On the Pentateuch With The Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum From the Chaldee by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. From http://www.becomingjewish.org/texts/targum/onkelos_Exodus.html and first published in 1862.

Occasionally, there is an obvious error in the English translation, and I correct those without additional mention or footnoting. For instance, the online version of the Targum of Onkelos which I use has *gorund* in Ex. 4:9; I simply corrected the text. This may occur once or twice in a chapter.

I attempt to include translations which are different in their vocabulary and phrasing. On many occasions, I may include a translation which is not substantially different than another listed translation.

Most of the translations can be found [here](#).

The very fact that we have ancient Greek, Latin, Syriac and Arabic translations of the Bible testifies to its accuracy. There may be a difference word or phrase here or there; the Greek may have a singular where the Hebrew has a plural, but there is no set of doctrines in the Latin Bible which are any different from those found in the Greek Bible or the Syriac Bible. These different cultures when they chose to translate the Bible chose to translate it as accurately as possible. Where human viewpoint would expect to find doctrinal differences between the Bible of the Hebrews, of the Greeks or of the Romans, no such differences exist.

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so hears Jethro, a priest of Midian, a father-in-law of Moses, of all that had done Elohim for Moses and for Israel His people, for brought out Y ^e howah Israel from Egypt.
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum (Onkelos)	AND Jethro, the rabba of Midian, the father in law of Mosheh, had heard of all that the Lord had done for Mosheh and for Israel His people, and that the Lord had brought Israel out of Mizraim. Translation for Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. (1862).
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jethro, prince of Midian, the father in law of Mosheh, heard all that the Lord had done for Mosheh and for Israel His people, and that the Lord had brought forth Israel from Mizraim.

Revised Douay-Rheims	And when Jethro the priest of Madian, the kinsman of Moses, had heard all the things that God had done to Moses, and to Israel his people, and that the Lord had brought forth Israel out of Egypt,...
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Now Yethro, the priest of Midian, Mosha's father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Mosha, and for Yisrael his people, how that Mar-Yah had brought Yisrael out of Egypt.
Peshitta (Syriac)	AND Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people, and that the LORD had brought the children of Israel out of Egypt;...
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And Jothor the priest of Madiam, the father-in-law of Moses, heard of all that the Lord did to his people Israel; for the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:⁴

Bible in Basic English	Now news came to Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, of all God had done for Moses and for Israel his people, and how the Lord had taken Israel out of Egypt.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Advice From Moses' Father-in-Law Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, was a priest in Midian. He heard about the many ways that God helped Moses and the Israelites. He heard about the Lord leading the Israelites out of Egypt
Good News Bible (TEV)	Jethro Visits Moses Moses' father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, heard about everything that God had done for Moses and the people of Israel when he led them out of Egypt.
<i>The Message</i>	Jethro, priest of Midian and father-in-law to Moses, heard the report of all that God had done for Moses and Israel his people, the news that God had delivered Israel from Egypt.
Names of God Bible	Moses' Father-in-law Visits Israel's Camp Moses' father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, heard about everything Elohim had done for Moses and his people Israel and how Yahweh had brought Israel out of Egypt.
NIRV	Jethro Visits Moses Moses' father-in-law Jethro was the priest of Midian. He heard about everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel. Jethro heard how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Jethro was the priest of Midian and the father-in-law of Moses. And he heard what the LORD God had done for Moses and his people, after rescuing them from Egypt.
The Living Bible	Word soon reached Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, the priest of Midian, about all the wonderful things God had done for his people and for Moses, and how the Lord had brought them out of Egypt.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	Jethro Helps Moses Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, the religious leader of Midian, heard about all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people.
New Living Translation	Jethro's Visit to Moses

⁴ Many of these Bibles fall into 2 or more categories. The CEV, for instance, is **approved** by the Catholic Church, it is a limited vocabulary Bible, and it is a paraphrase, for the most part.

Unlocked Dynamic Bible	Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, heard about everything God had done for Moses and his people, the Israelites. Jethro, who was the priest for the people of Midian, and who was also Moses' father-in-law, heard about all that God had done for the Israelite people. He heard about how Yahweh had brought them out of Egypt.
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Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Meanwhile, His Excellence (the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law) heard of all that Jehovah had done for his people IsraEl by bringing them out of Egypt.
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	Sharing the burden of leadership Jethro, Midian's priest and Moses' father-in-law, heard about everything that God had done for Moses and for God's people Israel, how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	And now news reached Jethro, priest of Madian, Moses' father-in-law, of all that God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and how the Lord had rescued Israel from Egypt.
Translation for Translators	Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, came to visit him Jethro, who was the priest for the Midian people-group, and who was also Moses'/my father-in-law, heard about all that God had done for the Israeli people. He heard about how Yahweh had brought them out of Egypt.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia	Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard all about what God had done for Moses, and for Israel, his people, and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Jethro Meets Moses. When Jethro, the priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses, heard all that GOD had done for Moses, and for Israel, His People ;—how the EVER-LIVING had led Israel out of Mitzer,...
God's Truth (Tyndale)	Jethro the priest of Madian Moses father in law heard of all that God had done unto Moses and to Israel his people, how that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt.
HCSB	Jethro's Visit Moses' father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, heard about everything that God had done for Moses and His people Israel, and how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.
Lexham English Bible	Jethro's Visit to Moses at the Mountain of God And Jethro, the priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses, heard all that God had done for Moses and for Israel, his people, that Yahweh had brought Israel out from Egypt.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Jethro, the priest of Midyan, Moses's father in law, heard all that God had done for Moses and for Israel, his people, that Yahweh had brought out Israel from Egypt.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, attentively heard all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, that Jehovah had brought Israel out of Egypt,...
New American Bible (2011) ⁵	<i>Meeting with Jethro.</i>

⁵ Also called the revised edition.

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

New English Bible—1970

Jethro, priest of Midian.

JETHRO PRIEST OF MIDIAN, father-in-law of Moses, heard all that God had done for Moses and Israel his people, and how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

Parashah 17: Yitro (Jethro) 18:1–20:23 (26)

Now Yitro the priest of Midyan, Moshe's father-in-law, heard about all that God had done for Moshe and for Isra'el his people, how *ADONAI* had brought Isra'el out of Egypt.

Israeli Authorized Version

When Yitro, the kohen of Midian, Moshe' father in law, heard of all that Elohim had done for Moshe, and for Yisrael his people, and that YY had brought Yisrael out of Egypt;...

The Scriptures 1998

And Yithro, the priest of Mid?yan, Mosheh's father-in-law, heard of all that Elohim had done for Mosheh and for Yisra'el His people, that יהוה had brought Yisra'el out of Mitsrayim.

Tree of Life Version

Parashat Vitro

Jethro's Advice

Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and Moses' father-in-law, heard about everything God had done for Moses and for His people Israel, and how *ADONAI* had brought Israel out of Egypt.

Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible

AND JOTHOR (*Jethro*) THE PRIEST OF MIDIAN, THE FATHER-IN-LAW OF MOSES, HEARD OF ALL THAT JESUS DID TO HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL; FOR JESUS BROUGHT ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT.

Awful Scroll Bible

Jethro, the priest of Midian, whom Moses is being the son-in-law of, was to hear what he of mighty ones, is to have prepared for Moses and Isra-el, his people, surely that Jehovah is to have led Isra-el out from Egypt.

exeGeser companion Bible

PRIEST YITHRO ADVISES MOSHEH

u!0 And Yithro,
priest of Midyan, in law of Mosheh
hears of all Elohim worked for Mosheh
and for Yisra El his people
- that Yah Veh brought Yisra El from Misrayim:...

Orthodox Jewish Bible

[VITRO]

When Yitro, the kohen of Midyan, Moshe's khoten (father-in-law), heard of all that Elohim had done for Moshe, and for Yisroel His people, and that Hashem had brought Yisroel out of Mitrayim;...

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible

Jethro Visits Moses

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, was the priest of Midian [2:15]. He heard about everything that God had done for Moses and his people, the Israelites, and how the Lord had led the Israelites out of Egypt.

Kretzmann's Commentary

Verses 1-12

Jethro Arrives with Zipporah

Syndein/Thieme	When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, his given name being Reuel and his official title Jethro, heard all that God had done for Moses and for Israel, His people, and that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt.
	When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard of all who 'Elohiym/Godhead had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that Jehovah/God had brought Israel out of Egypt.
The Voice	{Note: Jethro means "his abundance". Jethro is also called 'Jether' elsewhere.}. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, the priest of Midian, heard about all that God had done for Moses and His people Israel, and how the Eternal had rescued Israel out of Egypt.

Bible Translations with an Excess of Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach ⁶	Now Moses' father in law, Jethro, the chieftain of Midian, heard all that God had done for Moses and for Israel, His people that the Lord had taken Israel out of Egypt.
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Now...Jethro...heard: What news did he hear that [made such an impression that] he came? The splitting of the Red Sea and the war with Amalek. — [from Zev. 116a, and Mechilta, combining the views of Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Eliezer]

Jethro: He was called by seven names: Reuel, Jether, Jethro [i.e., Yithro], Hobab, Heber, Keni, [and] Putiel (Mechilta). [He was called] Jether (יֶתֶר) because he [caused] a section to be added (וְיָתֵר) to the Torah [namely]: "But you shall choose" (below verse 21). [He was called] Jethro (יֶתְרוֹ) [to indicate that] when he converted and fulfilled the commandments, a letter was added to his name. [He was called] Hobab (חֻבָּב) [which means lover] because he loved (וְיָבֵב) the Torah. Hobab was indeed Jethro, as it is said: "of the children of Hobab, Moses' father-in-law" (Jud. 4:11). Others say that Reuel was Jethro's father. [If so,] what [is the meaning of] what it [Scripture] says [referring to the daughters of Jethro]: "They came to their father Reuel" (Exod. 2:18)? Because [young] children call their grandfather "Father." [This appears] in Sifrei (Beha'alothecha 10:29).

Moses' father-in-law: Here Jethro prides himself on [his relationship to] Moses, [saying,] "I am the king's father-in-law." In the past, Moses attributed the greatness to his father-in-law, as it is said: "Moses went and returned to Jether, his father-in-law" (Exod. 4:18). [from Mechilta]

for Moses and for Israel: Moses was equal to all of Israel. [Mechilta]

all that...had done: for them with the descent of the manna, with the well, and with Amalek.

that the Lord had taken Israel out...: This was the greatest of them all. — [from Mechilta]

Kaplan Translation

Jethro's Advice

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, sheik of Midian, heard about all that God had done for Moses and His people Israel when He brought Israel out of Egypt. The Kaplan Translation, particularly in Exodus through Deuteronomy, takes note of historic rabbinic opinions.

Jethro

See notes on Exodus 2:18, 3:1. According to some authorities, Jethro was Moses' brother-in-law (Ibn Ezra on Numbers 10:29).

⁶ Also known as the Complete Tanach (and as *The Complete Jewish Bible*) with Rashi's Commentary. I do not know who did the original translation, but it has been edited by translator and scholar, Rabbi A.J. Rosenberg. It is found [here](#).

There is a question as to whether or not the Torah is in chronological order here. According to some, Jethro came before the giving of the Ten Commandments, while according to others, he came afterward (Zevachim 116a; Ramman).

Jethro

Actually, 'Jethro, father-in-law of Moses.' The same is true in Exodus 18:5 and 18:12, but for the sake of simplicity, it is abbreviated.

Reuel (from Exodus 2:18)

Some say that he was their grandfather (cf. Numbers 10:29; Targum Yonathan; Rashbam; Ibn Ezra; Radak, Sherashim, s.v. Chathan). Others identify Reuel with Jethro (see Exodus 3:1; Mekhilta, Rashi, on Exodus 18:1; Josephus 2:12:1; see Sifri on Numbers 10:29). The name Reuel is also found in Genesis 36:4.

Jethro (from Exodus 3:1)

Yithro in Hebrew.

The Advice of Jethro

¹ Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard about all that God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, that² the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt.³

^{1st} This chapter forms the transition to the Law. There has been the deliverance, the testing passages, the provision in the wilderness, and the warfare. Any God who can do all this for his people deserves their allegiance. In chap. 18 the Lawgiver is giving advice, using laws and rulings, but then he is given advice to organize the elders to assist. Thus, when the Law is fully revealed, a system will be in place to administer it. The point of the passage is that a great leader humbly accepts advice from other godly believers to delegate responsibility. He does not try to do it all himself; God does not want one individual to do it all. The chapter has three parts: vv. 1-12 tell how Jethro heard and came and worshiped and blessed; vv. 13-23 have the advice of Jethro, and then vv. 24-27 tell how Moses implemented the plan and Jethro went home. See further E. J. Runions, "Exodus Motifs in 1 Samuel 7 and 8," *EvQ* 52 (1980): 130-31; and also see for another idea T. C. Butler, "An Anti-Moses Tradition," *JSOT* 12 (1979): 9-15.

^{2nd} This clause beginning with כִּי (ki) answers the question of what Jethro had heard; it provides a second, explanatory noun clause that is the object of the verb – "he heard (1) all that God had done... (2) that he had brought...." See R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 81, §490.

^{3rd} This is an important report that Jethro has heard, for the claim of God that he brought Israel out of bondage in Egypt will be the foundation of the covenant stipulations (Exod 20).

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and "Yitro ^{His remainder} , administrator of "Mid'yan ^{Quarrel} , in-law of "Mosheh ^{Plucked out} , heard all which "Elohiym ^{Powers} did (for) "Mosheh ^{Plucked out} and (for) "Yisra'el ^{He turns El aside} his people, given that "YHWH ^{He Is} made "Yisra'el ^{He turns El aside} go out from "Mits'rayim ^{Two straits} ,...
Concordant Literal Version	Jethro, the priest of Midian, father-in-law of Moses, heard of all that Elohim had done for Moses and for Israel, His people, when Yahweh had brought Israel forth from Egypt.
Modern English Version	Jethro Counsels Moses Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel His people, and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.
NASB	Jethro, Moses' Father-in-law Now Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people, how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.
New European Version	Jethro Visits Moses Now Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, how that Yahweh had brought Israel out of Egypt.

New King James Version

Jethro's Advice

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.

Webster's Bible Translation

When Jethro the priest of Midian, Moses's father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt:...

The gist of this passage:

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, hears about what God had done through Moses.

Exodus 18:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâma' (שָׁמָע) [pronounced shaw-MAHÇ]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
Yith ^o rôw (יִתְרוֹ) [pronounced yihth-ROW]	<i>his abundance; his excellence and is transliterated Jethro, Jether</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3503 BDB #452
kôhên (כֹּהֵן) [pronounced koh-HANE]	<i>priest; principal officer or chief ruler</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3548 BDB #463
Mid ^e yân (מִדְיָן) [pronounced mihd-YAWN]	<i>strife; transliterated Midian, Midjan</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #4080 BDB #193
chôthên (חֹתֵן) [pronounced khoh-THAIN]	<i>father-in-law, the wife's father</i>	Qal participle of verb; used as a substantive; masculine singular construct	Strong's #2859 BDB #368
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced moh-SHEH]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

Together, kôl 'ăsher mean *all which, all whom, all that [which]; whomever, whatever, whatever else, all whose, all where, wherever*.

Exodus 18:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿāsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to produce, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i>]	<i>God prevails; contender; soldier of God; transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun; God-given name to Jacob; and national name for the Jewish people	Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

Translation: Jethro, Moses's father-in-law and a priest of Midian, heard all that Elohim had done for Moses and for His people Israel,...

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, hears about what has been taking place. At the same time, Moses is out in the desert-wilderness leading the people of Israel.

We have already seen that Moses first knew Jethro as Reuel (Exodus 2:18) and later as Jethro (Exodus 3:1). The former name was possibly the more formal, as we men would originally address our (future) father-in-law's as *Mr. So-and-so* and then later as plain *So-and-so*. That is, we first address them by their last names and, after we have become comfortable with them and they have given us permission, we address them by their first names. Something along these lines is all that occurred here.

Jethro had been in Midian, but he hears about what has happened in Egypt. This suggests that people all over that part of the world heard about what God did to Egypt in order to deliver Israel. It was no doubt an amazing story.

What happened in Egypt has been broadcast throughout all of the ancient world, mostly by transient traders, the original on-the-spot coverage news team; and when 2,000,000 people are moving from point A to point B, this also makes news. So Jethro knew that Moses was moving in his direction. Midian is on the other side of the Gulf of Aqaba from where Israel is camped. There are some mountains in between, but there had been certainly a trade route which had been established that Jethro took. Jethro had a great fondness for Moses and Moses learned a great deal of spiritual information from Jethro (although he did not apply it and put it altogether until he had been in Egypt for a month). There is no hint of bitterness about his daughter having returned with two children who could now be in their late teens or young adults (remember that not a lot of time has actually passed since Moses originally returned to Egypt). Given that Moses lives in Midian for 40 years, the sons could even be 35 years old or so.

Moses is leading his people through the desert-wilderness, and not too far away in Midian, Moses' father-in law hears what is taking place.

Exodus 18:1a **And Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people....** (NKJV)


Only a few months earlier, Moses left with his wife and two children in tow. However, at this point in time (a few months later), his wife went back to Midian. Did she choose to leave Moses over the circumcision (which she did not like having to perform)? Or did Moses send her back for her safety?

Moses' marriage is somewhat a mystery to us. There are only two sons produced (they may be as old as 38 or 39 years). And, at this point in time, Zipporah, Moses' wife, is with her father, even though she originally left with Moses to go to Egypt.

Jethro, the father-in-law, knew Moses and he knew his own daughter. He does not appear to offer Moses relationship advice.

Exodus 18:1b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
yâtsâ' (יצא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i>]	<i>to cause to go out, to lead out, to bring out, to carry out, to draw out, to take out [of money]; to put forth, to lay out, to exact; to promulgate; to produce</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Yis ^e râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i>]	<i>God prevails; contender; soldier of God; transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun; God-given name to Jacob; and national name for the Jewish people	Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975

Exodus 18:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
			
		<p><i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from; some of; on account of, since, than, more than</i></p>	
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]		preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
Mits ^e rayim (מִצְרַיִם) [pronounced <i>mits-RAH-yim</i>]	<i>double straights</i> ; transliterated <i>Mizraim</i> ; also <i>Egypt, Egyptians</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #4714 BDB #595

Translation: ...for [he heard that] Y^ehowah brought Israel out of Egypt.

Somehow, Jethro heard what happened in Egypt. It would be my assumption that trading caravans conveyed much of the news of that era. They traveled from one city to the next, trading spices and wares, and bringing news from whatever places they have been to.

Moses Goes Out to Meet His Father-in-Law (a graphic); from [Blog Spot](#); accessed July 19, 2023.

Although I saw this picture in many places, I did not come across its actual name or the original artist. Moses is portrayed as much older than Jethro, which may have been the case. Zipporah, Moses' wife, stands to the side with two young sons. However, I suspect that these were no longer boys but older men, possibly in their mid-30s, at this time.

Exodus 18:1 Jethro, Moses's father-in-law and a priest of Midian, heard all that Elohim had done for Moses and for His people Israel, for [he heard that] Y^ehowah brought Israel out of Egypt. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Probably by means of trading caravans, Jethro hears about what has taken place in Egypt and what his son-in-law was doing; and he wanted to make contact with Moses. He also had another reason for coming there.

Exodus 18:1 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law who was also a priest in Midian, heard all about what God had done through Moses and for His people Israel. He heard that Jehovah brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. (Kukis paraphrase)

Translations divide up the next few verses differently. Some continue into v. 5; and some continue v. 5 into v. 6.

And so takes Jethro, a father-in-law of Moses, Zipporah, wife of Moses, after her sending away and two of her sons, where a name of the first [is] Gershom, for he said, "A stranger I was in a land foreign;" and a name of the [other] one Eliezer, for "Elohim of my father [is] in my help, for He rescued me from a sword of Pharaoh."

Exodus
18:2–4

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after her departing with her two sons. The name of one of whom [is] Gershom, for [Moses] said, "I was a stranger in a foreign land." The name of the [other] one was Eliezer, for [Moses said,] "The Elohim of my father [is] my help, for He saved me from the sword of Pharaoh."

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, from Midian, to where Moses was, after she had left Moses. And Jethro also took her two sons, Gershom, who received that name because Moses was a stranger in a strange land, and Eliezer, so named because Moses knew that God had helped him. God had preserved him from Pharaoh's sword.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so takes Jethro, a father-in-law of Moses, Zipporah, wife of Moses, after her sending away and two of her sons, where a name of the first [is] Gershom, for he said, "A stranger I was in a land foreign;" and a name of the [other] one Eliezer, for "Elohim of my father [is] in my help, for He rescued me from a sword of Pharaoh."

Dead Sea Scrolls
Targum (Onkelos)

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And Jethro, Mosheh's father in law, took Zipporah the wife of Mosheh, after he had let her go, and his two sons, the name of the one Gershom; For, he said, I have been a sojourner in a strange land; and the name of the other Eliezer; For (said he) the God of my fathers hath been my helper, and hath delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

And Jethro the father in law of Mosheh took Zipporah his wife, whom Mosheh had sent back from him after going into Mizraim, and his two sons, the name of the one of whom was Gershom, Because He had said, I am a dweller in a strange land which is not mine; and the name of the other Eliezer, For (he had said) the God of my fathers was my helper, and saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.

Revised Douay-Rheims

He took Sephora the wife of Moses whom he had sent back: And her two sons, of whom one was called Gersam, his father saying: I have been a stranger in a foreign country. And the other Eliezer: For the God of my father, said he, is my helper, and has delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.

Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Yethro, Mosha's father-in-law, received Zipporah, Mosha's wife, after he had sent her away, and her two sons. The name of one son was Gershom, for Mosha said, "I have lived as a foreigner in a foreign land". The name of the other was Eliezer, for he said, "My father's God was my help and delivered me from Pharaoh's sword."
Peshitta (Syriac)	Then Jethro, Moses father-in-law, took his daughter Zipporah, Moses wife, after he had sent her back, And her two sons; of whom the name of the one was Gershon; for he said, I have been an alien in a foreign land; And the name of the other was Eliezer; For the God of my fathers, said he, was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh;...
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And Jothor the father-in-law of Moses, took Sepphora the wife of Moses after she had been sent away, and her two sons: the name of the one was Gersam, his father saying, I was a sojourner in a strange land; — and the name of the second Eliezer, saying, For the God of my father is my helper, and he has rescued me out of the hand of Pharaoh.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her away, And her two sons, one of whom was named Gershom, for he said, I have been living in a strange land: And the name of the other was Eliezer, for he said, The God of my father was my help, and kept me safe from the sword of Pharaoh:...
Easy English	Moses had sent Zipporah, who was his wife, back to her home. Then her father, Jethro, brought her and her two sons into his house. One son was called Gershom. Moses said about him, 'I have become a stranger in a foreign country.' The other son was called Eliezer. Moses said about him, 'My father's God gave me help. He saved me from Pharaoh, when Pharaoh wanted to kill me.'
Easy-to-Read Version—2006	<p>18:4The name Gershom means 'a foreign person'. The name Eliezer means 'My God gives me help'.</p> <p>So Jethro went to Moses while Moses was camped near the mountain of God.^[a] Jethro brought Moses' wife, Zipporah, with him. (Zipporah was not with Moses, because Moses had sent her home.) Jethro also brought Moses' two sons with him. The first son was named Gershom,^[b] because when he was born, Moses said, "I am a stranger in a foreign country." The other son was named Eliezer,^[c] because when he was born, Moses said, "The God of my father helped me and saved me from the king of Egypt."</p> <p>^[a] Exodus 18:2 mountain of God That is, Mount Horeb (Sinai). ^[b] Exodus 18:3 Gershom This name is like the Hebrew words meaning "a stranger there." ^[c] Exodus 18:4 Eliezer This name means "My God helps."</p>
Good News Bible (TEV)	So he came to Moses, bringing with him Moses' wife Zipporah, who had been left behind, and Gershom and Eliezer, her two sons. (Moses had said, "I have been a foreigner in a strange land"; so he had named one son Gershom. ^[a] He had also said, "The God of my father helped me and saved me from being killed by the king of Egypt"; so he had named the other son Eliezer. ^[b])
The Message	<p>^[a] Exodus 18:3 This name sounds like the Hebrew for "foreigner." ^[b] Exodus 18:4 This name sounds like the Hebrew for "God helps me."</p> <p>Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken in Zipporah, Moses' wife who had been sent back home, and her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom (Sojourner) for he had said, "I'm a sojourner in a foreign land"; the name of the other was Eliezer (God's-Help) because "The God of my father is my help and saved me from death by Pharaoh."</p>

Names of God Bible	When Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro had taken her in, along with her two sons. The one son was named Gershom [Foreigner], because Moses said, "I was a foreigner living in another country." The name of the other was Eliezer [My God Is a Helper], because he said, "My father's Elohim was my helper. He saved me from Pharaoh's death sentence."
NIRV	Moses had sent his wife Zipporah to his father-in-law. So Jethro welcomed her and her two sons. One son was named Gershom. That's because Moses had said, "I'm an outsider in a strange land." The other was named Eliezer. That's because Moses had said, "My father's God helped me. He saved me from Pharaoh's sword."
New Simplified Bible	Moses sent his wife Zipporah and her two sons to stay with Jethro. Jethro welcomed them. Moses was still a foreigner in Midian when his first son was born. Moses said: »I will name him Gershom.« When his second son was born, Moses said: »I will name him Eliezer, because the God my father worshiped has saved me from the king of Egypt.«

Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	In the meantime, Moses had sent his wife Zipporah and her two sons to stay with Jethro, and he had welcomed them. Moses was still a foreigner in Midian when his first son was born, and so Moses said, "I'll name him Gershom." When his second son was born, Moses said, "I'll name him Eliezer, because the God my father worshiped has saved me from the king of Egypt."
The Living Bible	Then Jethro took Moses' wife, Zipporah, to him (for he had sent her home), along with Moses' two sons, Gershom (meaning "foreigner," for Moses said when he was born, "I have been wandering in a foreign land") and Eliezer (meaning "God is my help," for Moses said at his birth, "The God of my fathers was my helper and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh").
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, had taken Moses' wife, Zipporah, after Moses had sent her away. And he had taken her two sons. One was given the name Gershom, for he said, "I have been a stranger in a strange land." The other was given the name Eliezer, for he said, "The God of my father was my help. And He saved me from the sword of Pharaoh."
New Living Translation	Earlier, Moses had sent his wife, Zipporah, and his two sons back to Jethro, who had taken them in. (Moses' first son was named Gershom, ^[a] for Moses had said when the boy was born, "I have been a foreigner in a foreign land." His second son was named Eliezer, ^[b] for Moses had said, "The God of my ancestors was my helper; he rescued me from the sword of Pharaoh.") ^[a] 18:3 Gershom sounds like a Hebrew term that means "a foreigner there." ^[b] 18:4 Eliezer means "God is my helper."
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	Moses had sent his wife Zipporah and his two sons back home when he was returning to Egypt. But now Jethro came to him, bringing Zipporah and her sons. One son was named Gershom, which sounds like the Hebrew word that means "foreigner" because Moses had said, "I have been a foreigner living in another land." Her other son was named Eliezer, which sounds like the Hebrew word that means "God helps me" because Moses had said, "God, whom my father worshiped, has helped me and saved me from being killed by the king of Egypt."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So His Excellence [went to see Moses], bringing along Moses' woman SepPhoran (since [Moses] had sent her 3 and her two sons away). [One of his sons] was named Gersam (Visitor), because, as [Moses] said: 'I was a visitor in a strange land,' 4 and [the other was named] EliEzer (My God is my Helper), because as
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[Moses] said: 'The God of my fathers is my helper and He rescued me from the hands of Pharaoh.'

Beck's American Translation
Common English Bible

Moses' father-in-law Jethro took with him Zipporah, Moses' wife whom he had sent away, along with her two sons. One was named Gershom because he said, "I have been an immigrant^[a] living in a foreign land." The other was named Eliezer^[b] because he said, "The God of my ancestors was my helper who rescued me from Pharaoh's sword."

^[a] Exodus 18:3 Heb ger sounds like Gershom.

^[b] Exodus 18:4 Or my God is a helper.

International Standard V

Now Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken back Moses' wife Zipporah after she had been sent away, along with her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom, because he used to say, "I was an alien^a in a foreign land," while the name of the other was Eliezer,^b because he used to say,^c "My father's God helped me and delivered me from Pharaoh's sword."

^a 18:3 The Heb. word for alien (ger) sounds like Gershom

^b 18:4 The Heb. name Eliezer means My God helps

^c 18:4 The Heb. lacks he used to say

New Advent (Knox) Bible

So he brought Moses his wife Sephora (for Moses had sent her back home), and his two sons. The elder of these was called Gersam, because his father said, I have been a stranger, Ger, in an alien land, and the younger Eliezer, Help from God, because, said Moses, the God of my father has helped me to escape from the power of Pharaoh.

Translation for Translators

Moses/I had *previously* sent his/my wife Zipporah *back home when he/I was returning to Egypt*. But now Jethro came to him/me, bringing Zipporah and their/our two sons. One son was named Gershom, *which sounds like the Hebrew word that means 'foreigner'*, because he/I had said, "I have been a foreigner living in another land." Her other son was named Eliezer, *which sounds like the Hebrew words that mean 'God helps me'*, because he/I had said "God, whom my father *worshipped*, has helped me and saved *me* from being killed [MTY] by the king of Egypt."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia Translation

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken back Zipporah, Moses' wife, after Moses had sent her back, along with her two sons. One of these was named Gershom [From the Hebrew גר (ger) sojourner and שמ (shem) a name.], because Moses had said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land. The other was named Eliezer [Literally, "God is my help."], because Moses had said, "The God of my father was my help, and rescued me from the sword of Pharaoh."

Ferrar-Fenton Bible

...—then Jethro, the father-in-, took Zifora, the wife of Moses, who had sent her back, and her two sons,—(the name of the I have been a stranger in a strange land, -and the name of the other For the GOD of my fathers has been a comfort and refuge to me."

God's Truth (Tyndale)

And he took Zippora Moses wife, after she was sent back, and her two sons, of which the one was called Gerson, for he said: I have been alien in a strange land. And the other was called Eliesar: for the God of my father was mine help and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.

Unlocked Literal Bible

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her home, and her two sons; the name of the one son was Gershom, for Moses had said, "I have been a foreigner in a foreign land." The name of the other was Eliezer, for Moses had said, "My ancestor's God was my help. He rescued me from Pharaoh's sword."

Urim-Thummim Version

Then Jethro (Moses' father in law) took Zipporah (Moses' woman) after she had been sent home, and her two sons, one was named Gershom for he said, I have

been a foreigner in a foreign land. And the name of the other was Eliezer, for the Elohim of my father said He was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.

Wikipedia Bible Project And Jethro, Moses's father in law, took Zipporah, Moses's wife, after her sending away. And her two sons, of whom the name of the one is Gershom, because he said "I was a stranger (ger) in a foreign land". And the name of the one is Eliezer (My God is an aid)--- because my fathers' God is at my aid, and rescued me from Pharaoh's sword.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) After Moses had sent away Zipporah, his wife, Jethro, his father-in-law, received her and her two sons. The first, Moses had called Gershom, to remember that he had been a guest in a foreign land, and the other Eliezer, for he said, "The God of my father came to my help and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh."

The Heritage Bible And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had given her a parting gift, And her two sons, the one whose name was Gershom - because he said, I have been a foreigner in a foreign land - And the name of the one was Eliezer - because the God of my father was my help, and snatched me from the sword of Pharaoh;...

New American Bible (2011) So his father-in-law Jethro took along Zipporah, Moses' wife—now this was after Moses had sent her back—* and her two sons. One of these was named Gershom; [Ex 2:22] for he said, "I am a resident alien in a foreign land." The other was named Eliezer; for he said, "The God of my father is my help; he has rescued me from Pharaoh's sword."

* [18:2] **Moses had sent her back:** a later gloss which attempts to harmonize Zipporah's presence with Jethro here in this story and the account of Moses' return to Egypt with Zipporah in 4:20.

New English Bible—1970 When Moses had dismissed his wife Zipporah, Jethro his father-in-law had received her and her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom, 'for', said Moses, 'I have become an alien ^{cp 2.22} living in a foreign land'; the other's name was Eliezer ^{That} is God my help, 'for', he said, 'the God of my father was my help and saved me from Pharaoh's sword.'

Revised English Bible—1989 When Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, Jethro his father-in-law had received her and her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom, "for", said Moses, "I have become an alien living in a foreign land"; the other's name was Eliezer, "for", he said, "the God of my father was my help and saved me from Pharaoh's sword."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible After Moshe had sent away his wife Tzipporah and her two sons, Yitro Moshe's father-in-law had taken them back. The name of the one son was Gershom, for Moshe had said, "I have been a foreigner in a foreign land." The name of the other was Eli'ezer [my God helps], "because the God of my father helped me by rescuing me from Pharaoh's sword."

Tree of Life Version (Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken in Moses' wife Zipporah, after he had sent her away with her two sons. One was named Gershom [Heb. *Ger (an outsider) sham (there)*.] because he said, "I have been an outsider in a foreign land," and the name of the other was Eliezer because he said, "For my father's God is my help [Heb. *Eli (my God) etzer (help)*.], and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.")

Weird English,      English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	AND JOTHOR THE FATHER-IN-LAW OF MOSES, TOOK SEPPHORA THE WIFE OF MOSES AFTER SHE HAD BEEN SENT AWAY, AND HER TWO SONS: THE NAME OF THE ONE WAS GERSAM, [because] HIS DAD [Moses] SAID, "I WAS A SOJOURNER IN A FOREIGN LAND." AND THE NAME OF THE SECOND, ELIEZER. [Because Moses] SAID, "FOR THE THEOS (<i>Alpha & Omega</i>) OF MY FATHER IS MY HELPER, AND HE HAS RESCUED ME OUT OF THE HAND OF PHARAOH."
Awful Scroll Bible	Jethro, whom Moses is being the son-in-law of, was to take Zipporah, Moses' wife, after that being sent away, and his two sons; the one's name is Gershom, for he is to have said: I am a nonnative on unfamiliar solid grounds; and the name of the other is Eliezer, for he of mighty ones of my fathers is my support, and was to snatch me away from the sword of Pharaoh; even Jethro, to whom Moses is being the son-in-law of, was to come in with his sons and wife to Moses, to the wilderness where he was to camp, at the mount of he of mighty ones. V. 5 is included for context.
Concordant Literal Version	Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, took Zipporah, the wife of Moses, to him after her dismissal, and her two sons, of whom the name of one was Gershom, (for he said: A sojourner became I in a foreign land). And the name of the other one was Eliezer: (for the Elohim of my father is my Helper, and He rescued me from the sword of Pharaoh).
exeGesese companion Bible	then Yithro, in law of Mosheh takes Sipporah, woman of Mosheh, with her dowries and her two sons; of whom the name of the one is Gershom; for he says, I become a sojourner in a strange land: and the name of the one is Eli Ezer; for the Elohim of my father, is my help and rescues me from the sword of Paroh.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	Then Yitro, Moshe's khoten, received Tzipporah, Moshe's wife, after Moshe had sent her away, And her two banim; of which the shem of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been a ger in a foreign land; And the shem of the other was Eliezer; for the Elohei Avi, said he, was ezri (my help), and delivered me from the cherev of Pharaoh;...
Rotherham's <i>Emphasized B.</i>	So Jethro, Moses father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses wife,—after she had been sent home; and her two sons,—of whom, the name of the one, was Gershom, for, said he, A sojourner, am I in a strange land, and, the name of the other, Eliezer, for the God of my father, was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	Now Moses had sent [^L away] his wife Zipporah [2:21] to Jethro, his father-in-law [4:24–26], along with his two sons. The first son was named Gershom [^C sounds like Hebrew for "stranger there"], because when he was born, Moses said, "I am a ·stranger [sojourner; wanderer; resident alien] in a foreign country." The other son was named Eliezer [^C sounds like Hebrew for "my God is help"], because when he was born, Moses said, "The God of my father is my help. He saved me from ·the king of Egypt [^L the sword of Pharaoh]."
Kretzmann's Commentary	...then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, which probably happened after the adventure in the inn, Ex. 4:24-26, and her two sons; of which the name of the one was Gershom (a stranger I am); for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land; and the name of the other was Eliezer (God my Helper); for the God of my father, said he, was mine Help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh. These two sons had been born to Moses in the

land of Midian while he lived with his father-in-law Reuel, Ex. 2:22; Ex. 4:25. It seems that Moses had agreed with his wife that she should meet him when he would return with the children of Israel; for he had had, even at that time, the promise of the Lord that Israel would be delivered out of the house of bondage, and that they would worship God on Mount Horeb. As the news of the mighty deeds of God, therefore, went out into the surrounding countries, Jethro also heard it and acted accordingly.

The Voice

Now Moses had sent his wife, Zipporah, and her two sons back to Jethro *from Egypt*, and Jethro had cared for them *in his long absence*. *Moses had* named one son Gershom, because as he said, "I have lived as an outsider in an unfamiliar land." [Exodus 2:22] *Moses had* named the other son Eliezer, for he said, "My father's God was my helper, and He rescued me from Pharaoh's sword."

Bible Translations with an Excess of Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach

So Moses' father in law, Jethro, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after she had been sent away,...

after she had been sent away: When the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him in Midian, "Go, return to Egypt" (Exod. 4: 19), "and Moses took his wife and his sons, etc." (Exod. 4:20), and Aaron went forth "and met him on the mount of God" (Exod. 4:27), he [Aaron] said to him [Moses], "Who are these?" He [Moses] replied, "This is my wife, whom I married in Midian, and these are my sons." "And where are you taking them?" he [Aaron] asked. "To Egypt," he replied. He [Aaron] retorted, "We are suffering with the first ones, and you come to add to them?" He [Moses] said to her [Zipporah], "Go home to your father." She took her two sons and went away. — [from Mechilta]

...and her two sons, one of whom was named Gershom, because he [Moses] said, "I was a stranger in a foreign land," and one who was named Eliezer, because [Moses said,] "The God of my father came to my aid and rescued me from Pharaoh's sword."

and rescued me from Pharaoh's sword: When Dathan and Abiram informed [Pharaoh] about the incident of the Egyptian [whom Moses had slain], and he [Pharaoh] sought to slay Moses, his [Moses'] neck became [as hard] as a marble pillar. — [from Exod. Rabbah 1:31, Deut. Rabbah 2:27]

Kaplan Translation

Jethro brought along Moses' wife, *Tzipporah*, who had been *sent home earlier*, and her two sons. The name of the [first] one was *Gershom*, because [Moses] had declared, 'I was a foreigner (ger) in a strange land.' The name of the [other] one was *Eliezer*, because, 'My father's God (El) was my Helper (Ezer), rescuing me from Pharaoh's sword.'

Jethro

Actually, 'Jethro, father-in-law of Moses.' The same is true in Exodus 18:5 and 18:12, but for the sake of simplicity, it is abbreviated.

Tzipporah

See Exodus 2:21.

sent home earlier

At Aaron's advice (Mekhilta; Rashi), soon after the episode of the circumcision (Exodus 4:25).

Gershom

See Exodus 2:22.

Eliezer

See note on Exodus 4:20 (**sons** This indicates that Moses' second son, Eliezer (Exodus 18:4) had already been born. He might have just been born, and since it was before his circumcision, not yet named. See Exodus 4:24.); Exodus 2:15.

NET Bible®

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Moses' wife Zipporah after he had sent her back, and her two sons, one of whom was named Gershom (for Moses⁴ had said, "I have been a foreigner in a foreign land"), and the other Eliezer (for Moses had said,⁵ "The God of my father has been my help⁶ and delivered⁷ me from the sword of Pharaoh").

^{4tn} Heb "he"; the referent (Moses) has been specified in the translation for clarity (also in the following verse).

^{5tn} The referent (Moses) and the verb have been specified in the translation for clarity.

^{6tn} Now is given the etymological explanation of the name of Moses' other son, Eliezer (אֱלִיעֶזֶר, 'eli'ezer), which means "my God is a help." The sentiment that explains this name is אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי יֵעֲזָרֵנִי ('elohe 'avi b'y'ezri, "the God of my father is my help"). The preposition in the sentiment is the bet (ב) essentiae (giving the essence – see GKC 379 §119.i). Not mentioned earlier, the name has become even more appropriate now that God has delivered Moses from Pharaoh again. The word for "help" is a common word in the Bible, first introduced as a description of the woman in the Garden. It means to do for someone what he or she cannot do for himself or herself. Samuel raised the "stone of help" (Ebenezer) when Yahweh helped Israel win the battle (1 Sam 7:12).

^{7sn} The verb "delivered" is an important motif in this chapter (see its use in vv. 8, 9, and 10 with reference to Pharaoh).

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and **"Yitro"** ^{His remainder}, in-law of **"Mosheh"** ^{Plucked out}, took **"Tsitporah"** ^{Bird}, Woman of **"Mosheh"** ^{Plucked out}, after sending her off, and (with) her two sons, which the title of the (one) is **"Gershom"** ^{Evicted}, given that he said, I existed as a stranger in a foreign land, and the title of the other one is **"Eli'ezer"** ^{My El helps}, given that **"Elohiym"** ^{Powers} of my father is in my help, he will deliver me from the sword of **"Paroh"** ^{Great house}, ...

Charles Thompson OT Now when Jothor the priest of Madiam, Moses' father in law heard of all that the Lord had done for his people Israel, (for while the Lord was bringing Israel out of Egypt Jothor the father in had taken home Sephora, Moses' wife, after she had gone back, with her two sons, of whom the name of one was Gersam; for he said, I was a stranger in a strange land; and the name of the other Eliezar; for the God of my fathers, said he, hath been my help, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Pharaoh) Jothor the father in came out to him with his sons and his wife to the wilderness where he was encamped by the mount of God. Vv. 1 & 5 are included for context.

Modern English Version Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, and her two sons, one of whom was named Gershom; for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land." And the name of the other was Eliezer, for he said, "The God of my father was my help, and He delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh."

New King James Version Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, with her two sons, of whom the name of one was ^[a]Gershom (for he said, "I have been a ^[b]stranger in a foreign land") and the name of the other was ^[c]Eliezer (for he said, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"); 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. 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." V. 5 is included for context.

^[a] Exodus 18:3 Lit. Stranger There

^[b] Exodus 18:3 sojourner, temporary resident

^[c] Exodus 18:4 Lit. My God Is Help

Third Millennium Bible ...then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after Moses had sent her back and her two sons (of whom the name of the one was Gershom [that is, A stranger there], for he said, "I have been an alien in a strange land"; and the

Young's Updated LT

name of the other was Eliezer [that is, My God is a help], "For the God of my father," said he, "was my help and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh";...
...and Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, takes Zipporah, wife of Moses, besides her parents, and her two sons, of whom the name of the one is Gershom, for he said, "a sojourner I have been in a strange land:" and the name of the other is Eliezer, for, "the God of my father is for my help, and does deliver me from the sword of Pharaoh."

The gist of this passage:

Jethro brought Moses's wife back to him, and his two children. Their names and the meaning of their names are given.

2-4

Exodus 18:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
Yith ^e rôw (יִתְרוֹ) [pronounced <i>yihth-ROW</i>]	<i>his abundance; his excellence and is transliterated Jethro, Jether</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3503 BDB #452
chôthên (חָתָן) [pronounced <i>khoh-THAIN</i>]	<i>father-in-law, the wife's father</i>	Qal participle of verb; used as a substantive; masculine singular construct	Strong's #2859 BDB #368
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Tsippôrâh (צִפּוֹרָה) [pronounced <i>tsihp-poh-RAW</i>]	<i>bird, lady-bird and is transliterated Zipporah, Tzipporah, Tsipporah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #6855 BDB #862
'ishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i>]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #802 BDB #61
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602

Translation: Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife,...

What appears to be the case, based upon this verse and the context, Zipporah was sent away from Moses or she deserted him. We do not know any of those details; although her angry reaction to having to circumcise one of her sons would suggest that she left Moses. In any case, at some point since Exodus 4, Ziporah returned to Midian with her two sons. However, now that Moses is moving in the direction of Midian, Jethro takes her to deliver her back to Moses.

The first (and only) verb in v. 2 is the 3rd person, masculine singular, Qal imperfect of lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAHK*] and it means *to take, to buy, to be taken in marriage, to take away from, to take to oneself*. Jethro is the subject and the direct object is Zipporah.

Zipporah means *bird*. Is the idea that, she is flighty? There are times in Scripture where I wonder if a person may have somehow acquired a more descriptive name that has stayed with that person rather than that person's given name at birth.

Exodus 18:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'achar (אַחַר) [pronounced <i>ah-KHAHR</i>]	<i>after, following, behind; afterwards, after that; another</i>	preposition/adverb	Strong's #310 BDB #29
shilluachîym (שִׁלּוּחַיִם) [pronounced <i>shill-loo-KHEEM</i>]	<i>a sending away, a parting gift</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7964 BDB #1019

This noun is always found in the plural and it is also spelled shillûwchîym (שִׁלּוּחַיִם) [pronounced *shill-loo-KHEEM*].

Translation: ...after her departing,...

There are a couple of problems with the NKJV translation in this chapter, and this is one of them.

The phrase which follows *the wife of Moses* is two words. The first is the adverb 'achar (אַחַר) [pronounced *akh-AR*] and it means *behind, following part, after, afterwards, following*. Strong's #310 BDB #29. There is no problem with this word.

The second word after *wife of Moses* in this verse is the masculine plural noun shilluachîym (שִׁלּוּחַיִם) [pronounced *shill-loo-KHEEM*] which has a meaning that is difficult to pinpoint. This word only occurs here and in 1Kings 9:16 and Micah 1:14. In the latter two verses, it is *presents*, that is, a dowry; and if used here in the same way, it would mean *her dowry (presents)*. This is the noun cognate for the verb which means *send*. However, it can also mean *partings, farewell* and I believe that it could be translated in that way in all the passages without doing too much damage to the context. I am spending a lot of time with this one word which we will see very little of because most Bibles translate this as (or similar to) *after he had sent her away* (NASB, Owen, KJV, *The Emphasized Bible*, NRSV, *The Amplified Bible*). Why don't we translate it this way? Two reasons: (1) it is not a verb. (2) we only have a singular feminine suffix appended to this word; *there is nothing to indicate that Moses actively sent Zipporah back home*. What I am saying here is that she likely deserted him, Moses did not send her away. It is very possible that this means *after her parting, after her farewell*. That is much different than what we find elsewhere.

In the Hebrew, there is a simple, common verb which means *to send*. That verb is shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced *shaw-LAKH*], and it is found nearly 900 times in the Old Testament! But, that verb is *not* found here. There is also a very common verb which means *to return*, and that verb is not used either. Whatever the exact meaning of this noun cognate is somewhat messy, and that might very well describe the separation of Moses and his wife.

With the noun, there is a 3rd person feminine suffix. This is how I translated these two words:

Exodus 18:2b *...after her departing...* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Apparently, while with Moses, she had been sent away or she departed (the latter is more in keeping with the word here). Perhaps she complained incessantly; perhaps Moses felt this was too dangerous; perhaps her heart was just not in it (based upon the circumcision situation, does this not seem to be the most likely?). For whatever reason, she ended up back in Midian. Her father-in-law brings her and the sons back to Moses. The sons are probably in their mid to late 30s, given the narrative of Moses leaving Egypt and coming to Midian.

This gives us just one more reason to believe that Zipporah did the deserting. If she returns to Midian with her two sons, and she says, "Moses sent me back;" then it is less likely that Jethro would attempt to reunite the two. If she returned of her own volition, the father-in-law gives it some time, hears the Moses is near, and then proposes to take her back to him. That would seem reasonable if she simply left Moses; less reasonable if Moses sent her away. There is the possibility that Moses sent her away for her own safety, but the Hebrew people in Goshen were reasonably safe the whole time.

No matter what the case, this will be the last time that we read Zipporah's name in the Bible.

Exodus 18:2 *Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after her departing...* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 18:3a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and; even; as well as; in particular, namely; when, while; since, seeing, though; so, then, therefore; or; but, but yet; who, which; or; that, in that, so that; with; also, in addition to, at the same time</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
sh ^e nêy (שְׁנֵי) [pronounced <i>sh^en-Ā</i>]	<i>two, two of, a pair of, a duo of; both of</i>	dual numeral construct	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
bânîym (בָּנִים) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i>]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men; young men, youths</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: *...with her two sons.*

Here, it appears that Zipporah left Moses with her two sons with her.

However, given v. 6, where Jethro brings her and the two children back, it appears that she left of her own volition (although the text is unclear).

This verse begins with the sign of a direct object, so that means we take the subject and the verb found earlier and apply it here. So, Jethro takes Zipporah and her two sons with him to Moses.

Her two sons—Moses' sons—are now identified.

Exodus 18:3b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
shēm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
ʾechād (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; each, every; but it can also mean a composite unity; possibly particular; anyone; same</i>	numeral adjective with the definite article	Strong's #259 BDB #25
Gêʾshôwm (גֵּרְשׁוֹם) [pronounced gay-rehsh-OHM]	<i>exile, refugee; to cast out; transliterated Gershon, Gershom</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #1648 BDB #177
Also spelled Gêʾshôwn (גֵּרְשׁוֹן) [pronounced gay-rehsh-OWN].			

Translation: [The name of one of whom \[is\] Gershom,...](#)

One of them is named Gershom. His name means *exile, refugee*.

It had been only a few months since Moses had seen this child. We do not know the ages of Gershom, but he is probably in his 30s (if Moses married soon after coming into Midian and likely began siring children soon thereafter). That appears to be what happened, although there is very little history given (Exodus 2:15–22). See [Exodus 2 \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

This is the son that Moses and his wife, Zipporah, set out with originally when they were coming to Egypt. At some point, she returned. This has to take place after Zipporah **circumcised** the second son, but we do not know how long after.

Moses lived in Midian for 40 years. He appears to have met Jethro and his family early on. How long did it take before Moses married Zipporah and how long was it before they had children? We do not know, but I would assume early in the marriage.

Exodus 18:3c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

Exodus 18:3c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
gêr (גֵּר) [pronounced gare]	<i>sojourner, stranger, immigrant [or, outsider], temporary resident [inhabitant]; newcomer without inherited [property] rights</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1616 BDB #158
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #776 BDB #75
nōk ^e rîy (נֹכְרִי) [pronounced nawck ^e -REE or nohk-REE]	<i>foreign, alien, stranger; strange; foreign woman, a harlot; of another family; metaphorically, unknown, unfamiliar; new, unheard of</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #5237 BDB #648

Translation: ...for [Moses] said, "I was a stranger in a foreign land."

Choosing this name suggests that Moses has just moved to Midian as opposed to him living there for 20 or more years.

Moses so named him *Gershom*, because there Moses was, living in Midian, a stranger in a strange land (this is also the name of a well-know science fiction book).

Goodreads lists 213 **books** which took their titles from the Bible.

Exodus 18:3 ...and her two sons. The name of one of whom [is] Gershom, for [Moses] said, "I was a stranger in a foreign land." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 18:3 (KJV) (a graphic); from **Scripture Images**; accessed July 19, 2023.

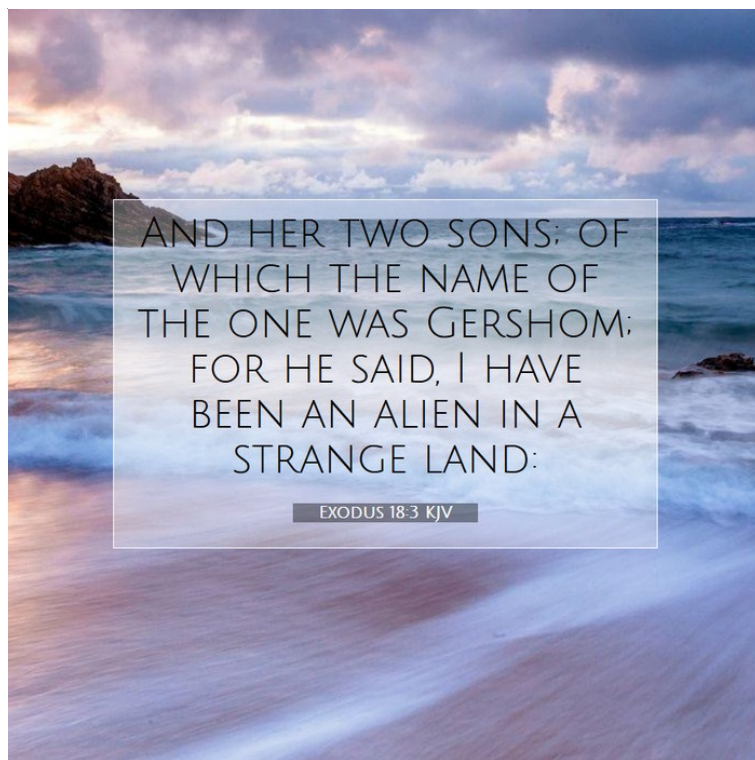
Exodus 18:2–3 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, with her two sons, of whom the name of one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land")... (NKJV)

Or, better:

Exodus 18:2–3 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after her departing with her two sons. The name of one of whom [is] Gershom, for [Moses] said, "I was a stranger in a foreign land." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Although Moses may have sent his wife back to Midian, given her response to circumcising her sons, it is more likely that she chose to go back to Midian.

The division of these verses is odd. *With her two sons* at the beginning of v. 3, should have been placed back with v. 2. Then v. 3 could have been all about one son, and v. 4 the other (or they could have been placed in the same verse).



Sometimes verse division is insightful; and there are other times when it makes no sense.

Exodus 18:4a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i>]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
'echâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced <i>eh-KHAWD</i>]	<i>one, first, certain, only; each, every; but it can also mean a composite unity; possibly particular; anyone; same</i>	numeral adjective with the definite article	Strong's #259 BDB #25
Ēlîy'ezer (אֱלִיֵּזֶר) [pronounced <i>ul-ee-EH-zehr</i>]	<i>El [God] of help; God is help; transliterated <i>Eliezer</i></i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #461 BDB #45

Translation: The name of the [other] one was Eliezer,...

The other son was named Eliezer—also named by Moses—and his name means *God is [my] help*. We know that Moses named his sons because their names both related to his situation or circumstance at their birth.

Given that both of their names seem to speak of Moses only recently being in Midian, that would make both sons adults at this point in our narrative.

Exodus 18:4b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
ʿĒlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
ʾāb (אָב) [pronounced aw ^b]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; ancestor, grandfather; founder, civil leader, military leader; master, teacher</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿezer (עֲזָרָה) [pronounced GAY-zer]	<i>help, aid</i>	masculine singular substantive with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5828 BDB #740

Translation: ...for [Moses said,] “The Elohim of my father [is] my help,...

God preserved Moses, allowing him to escape to Midian. Recall that he had killed an Egyptian slavedriver, and had to leave Egypt in order to escape punishment.

Eliezer's name means *God is help*.

Exodus 18:4c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nātsal (נָצַל) [pronounced naw-TSAHL]	<i>to snatch away, to deliver, to rescue, to snatch out of danger, to preserve, to recover</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5337 BDB #664
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from; some of; on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
chereb (חֶרֶב) [pronounced khe-RE ^B V]	<i>sword, knife, dagger; any sharp tool</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #2719 BDB #352

Exodus 18:4c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
par ^e ôh (הַעֲרֹף) [pronounced <i>pahr^e-GOH</i>]	<i>great house</i> ; possibly <i>hair head</i> (indicating one of great age and therefore with wisdom and authority); transliterated <i>pharaoh</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6547 BDB #829

Translation: ...for He saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.”

God kept Moses safe from Pharaoh, who wanted to execute him. This took place after Moses left Egypt, in order to preserve his own life (after killing the Egyptian slavedriver).

This is the last time that we will hear of Zipporah. She will not be mentioned again throughout the rest of the Bible. She apparently returns with the two sons under the direction of her father; we have no reason to believe otherwise.

Does Zipporah stay, does she desert Moses? Did she go back to Midian? Does she die out with the others who complain? We never find out; but Moses will marry again, whatever the case (Num. 12:1).

Speaking of whom, all the **fellowship**⁷ in this chapter will be between Jethro and Moses. We will never hear about Zipporah and Moses. Interestingly enough, in v. 3; they are called Zipporah's sons. They are mentioned again by name until 1Chron. 23:15 where they are there called the sons of Moses.

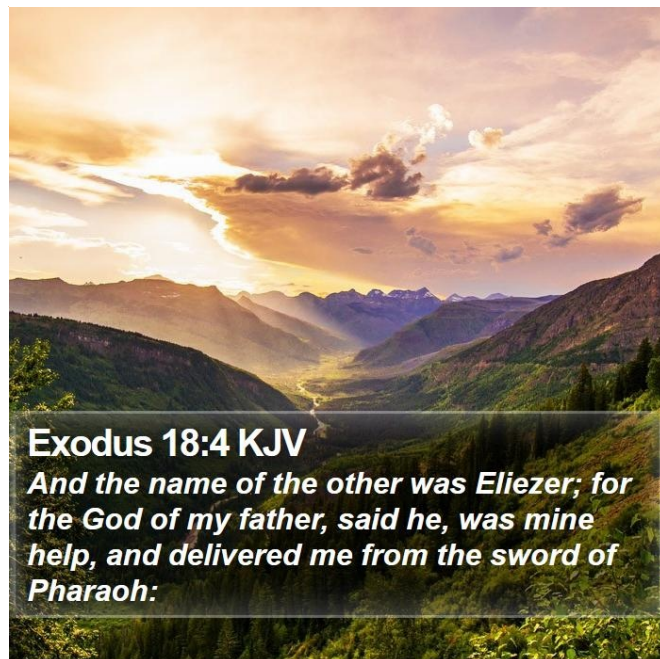
It is somewhat sad that Zipporah married the most influential man of that era, yet she seemed to stand in his way on several occasions.

Exodus 18:4 (KJV) (a graphic); from **Scripture Image**; accessed July 19, 2023.

Exodus 18:4 The name of the [other] one was Eliezer, for [Moses said,] “The Elohim of my father [is] my help, for He saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

When Moses named Eliezer, he had taken up residence in Midian and married Zipporah. They had two children, which is a relatively small number for that era (suggesting to me, chilly relations between Moses and Zipporah). Moses named his children in accordance with this experience. One child represented him living in a new, strange land; and the other represented him escaping execution by Pharaoh. In other words, Moses clearly named the children (which was commonplace). Furthermore, these names indicate that Moses has just moved to Midian.

Exodus 18:2–4 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after her departing with her two sons. The name of one of whom [is] Gershom, for [Moses] said, “I was a stranger in a foreign land.” The name of the [other] one was Eliezer, for [Moses said,] “The Elohim of my father [is] my help, for He saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)



⁷ Technically, in order for Moses and Jethro to enjoy fellowship as believers, they must be *in fellowship*, meaning that they have named their most recent sins to God.

Moses, when he first escaped Egypt, he went to Midian. He met a family with many daughters headed by a legitimate priest. Moses married one of those daughters—Zipporah—and had two sons by her: Gershom and Eliezer.

When following God's lead, Moses headed back to Egypt (40 years later). He left with his wife and two sons (meeting Aaron along the way), but he apparently lost his wife and family at some point. Although many translations say that Moses sent his wife back to Midian, that is not necessarily what the Hebrew says. One son was not circumcised; Moses began to die the sin unto death; and his wife had to circumcise that son. That was very problematic for her, and she returned to Midian sometime after that (it may have been immediately after that).

In any case, Zipporah will never be mentioned by name again in the Bible. Moses' sons will be named again in the birth records of Chronicles (1Chronicles 23:15–17 26:24–25). But they will not appear to play a significant part in the future of Israel.

At this point in the narrative, Jethro has not yet delivered Moses' family to him. He is going to warn Moses first what he is doing.

Exodus 18:2–4 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, from Midian, to where Moses was, after she had left Moses. . And Jethro also took her two sons, Gershom, who received that name because Moses was a stranger in a strange land, and Eliezer, so named because Moses knew that God had helped him. God had preserved him from Pharaoh's sword. (Kukis paraphrase)

Some translations present v. 5 as a continuation of v. 4; some place vv. 5–6 together; and some place them in separate paragraphs.

And so comes Jethro, father-in-law of Moses and his sons and his woman unto Moses, unto the wilderness where he is bivouacking, [at] a mountain of God. And so he says unto Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming unto you—and your woman and two of her sons with her."

Exodus
18:5–6

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, and Moses' [lit., his] sons and his wife, were coming to Moses, to the desert-wilderness. While he [Moses] is bivouacking, [at] the mountain of God, he [Jethro] said to Moses [through a messenger], "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you, with your wife and her two sons."

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, after hearing all these reports about Moses and what took place in Egypt, set out to come to Moses in the desert-wilderness. While Jethro is bivouacking at the mountain of God, he sent a messenger to Moses, who said, "I am your father-in-law Jethro and I am coming to you; and with me are your two sons and your wife."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so comes Jethro, father-in-law of Moses and his sons and his woman unto Moses, unto the wilderness where he is bivouacking, [at] a mountain of God. And so he says unto Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming unto you—and your woman and two of her sons with her."

Dead Sea Scrolls
Targum (Onkelos)

.
And Jethro the father in law of Mosheh came, and his sons, and his wife, to Mosheh in the desert where he had encamped at the mountain upon which was revealed the glory of the lord. And he had told Mosheh, I, thy father in law Jethro, come to thee with thy wife, and her two sons with her.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jethro the father in law of Mosheh, and the sons of Mosheh, and his wife came to Mosheh at the desert in which he was sojourning hard by the mountain upon which the glory of the Lord was revealed to Mosheh at the beginning. And he said to Mosheh, I, thy father in law Jethro, have come to thee to be a proselyte; and if thou wilt not receive me on my own account, receive me for the sake of thy wife and of her two sons who are with her.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Jethro the kinsman of Moses came with his sons and his wife, to Moses into the desert, where he was camped by the mountain of God. And he sent word to Moses, saying: I Jethro your kinsman come to you, and your wife, and your two sons with her.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Yethro, Mosha's father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Mosha into the wilderness where he was encamped, at the Mountain of God. He said to Mosha, "I, your father-in-law Yethro, have come to you with your wife, and her two sons with her."
Peshitta (Syriac)	...And Jethro, Moses father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness, where he encamped at the mountain of God; And Moses was told, Behold, your father-in-law Jethro has come to you with your wife and your two sons accompanying him,...
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And Jothor the father-in-law of Moses, and his sons and his wife, went forth to Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped on the mount of God. And it was told Moses, saying, Behold, thy father-in-law Jothor is coming to thee, and thy wife and two sons with him.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to where Moses had put up his tent in the waste land, by the mountain of God. And he said to Moses, I, your father-in-law, have come to you, with your wife and your two sons.
Easy English	Then Jethro came to Moses in the desert. Moses was staying near the mountain of God. Jethro brought with him Moses' sons and Moses' wife. 6 Jethro had sent a message to Moses. He said: 'I am Jethro, your wife's father. I am coming to you with your wife and her two sons.'
Easy-to-Read Version—2001	So Jethro went to Moses while Moses was camped in the desert near the mountain of God (Mount Sinai). Moses' wife and his two sons were with Jethro. {Jethro sent a message to Moses.} Jethro said, "This is your father-in-law Jethro. I am bringing your wife and her two sons to you."
<i>The Message</i>	Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought Moses his sons and his wife there in the wilderness where he was camped at the mountain of God. He had sent a message ahead` to Moses: "I, your father-in-law, am coming to you with your wife and two sons."
NIRV	Moses' father-in-law Jethro came to Moses in the desert. Moses' sons and wife came with Jethro. Moses was camped near the mountain of God. Jethro had sent a message to him. It said, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you. I'm bringing your wife and her two sons."
New Simplified Bible	Jethro, Moses' father-in-law brought Moses' sons and wife to Moses in the desert. He was camped near the mountain of God. Jethro sent word to Moses: »I am coming to visit you. I am bringing your wife and her two sons.«

Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	While Israel was camped in the desert near Mount Sinai, Jethro sent Moses this message: "I am coming to visit you, and I am bringing your wife and two sons."
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The Living Bible	They arrived while Moses and the people were camped at Mount Sinai. [or “Mount Horeb”; literally, “the mountain of God.”] “Jethro, your father-in-law, has come to visit you,” Moses was told, “and he has brought your wife and your two sons.”
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	Then Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, came to Moses with his sons and his wife to the desert by the mountain of God where he was staying. He sent the news to Moses, “I, your father-in-law, Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her.”
New Living Translation	Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, now came to visit Moses in the wilderness. He brought Moses’ wife and two sons with him, and they arrived while Moses and the people were camped near the mountain of God. Jethro had sent a message to Moses, saying, “I, Jethro, your father-in-law, am coming to see you with your wife and your two sons.”
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	While Moses was camped with the Israelite people in the wilderness near Sinai, God’s holy mountain, Jethro came to him, bringing along Moses’ wife and two sons. Jethro had sent a message to Moses, “I, your father-in-law, Jethro, am coming to see you. I am bringing your wife and her two sons!”

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	His Excellence took [Moses’ family] to him in the desert... to his camp on the Mountain of God. 6 And when Moses was told, ‘Look! His Excellence (your father-in-law) is coming and he’s bringing your wife and two sons with him,’
Beck’s American Translation	.
Common English Bible	Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, brought Moses’ sons and wife back to him in the desert where he had set up camp at God’s mountain. He sent word to Moses: “I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you along with your wife and her two sons.”
New Advent (Knox) Bible	So, here in the desert, where he lay encamped close to God’s mountain, Moses was visited by his father-in-law Jethro, and his sons, and his wife. Jethro had sent word on to tell Moses who it was that came, and that he had Sephora and her two sons with him.
Translation for Translators	While Moses/I was camped <i>with the Israeli people</i> in the desert <i>near Sinai</i> , God’s sacred/holy mountain, Jethro came to him/me, bringing along Moses’/my wife and our <i>two</i> sons. Jethro had sent a message to Moses/me, “I, your father-in-law, Jethro, am coming to see you, bringing along your wife and your two sons!”

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia Translation	Now Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, came to Moses with his sons and his wife, to the wilderness, where he was encamped next to the mountain of God [That is, Mount Horeb or Sinai.]. He said to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you, with your wife and her two sons with her."
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	...—so Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, · brought his two sons and his wife to Moses in the desert, where the Mount of God is. And he said to Moses, “I, Jethro, your father-in-law, have come to you with your wife and two sons.”
God’s Truth (Tyndale)	And Jethro Moses father in law came with his two sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness: where he had pitched his tent by the mount of God. And he sent word to Moses: I your father in law Jethro am come to you, and your wife also, and her two sons with her.
Jubilee Bible 2000	When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses’ father-in-law, heard of all that God had done with Moses and with Israel his people and how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt, then Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses’ wife, after he had sent her back, and her two sons, of which the name of the one was Gershon,

for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land, and the name of the other was Eliezer, for the God of my father, said he, helped me and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh; and Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he was camped next to the mount of God; and he said unto Moses, I, thy father-in-law Jethro, am come unto thee and thy wife and her two sons with her. Vv. 1–4 are included for context. This translation understood this to be one very long sentence.

Urim-Thummim Version

Then Jethro, Moses' father in law came with his sons and his woman to Moses in the desert where he encamped at the Mount of Elohim. And he said to Moses, your father in law Jethro has come to you and brings your woman and her two sons with her.

Wikipedia Bible Project

And Jethro, Moses's father in law, and his sons, and his wife, came to Moses, to the steppe, there where he was camped--- the mount of God. And said to Moses, "I Jethro, your father in law, come to you, and your wife, and your two sons with her."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)

So Jethro came with Moses' wife and sons to the desert where the people had encamped at the mountain of God. Moses was told, "Your father-in-law Jethro is here. He has come with your wife and her two sons."

New American Bible (2002)

Together with Moses' wife and sons, then, his father-in-law Jethro came to him in the desert where he was encamped near the mountain of God, and he sent word to Moses, "I, Jethro, your father-in-law, am coming to you, along with your wife and her two sons."

New Jerusalem Bible

Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, with Moses' sons and wife, came to Moses in the desert where he was encamped, at the mountain of God. 'Here is your father-in-law Jethro approaching', Moses was told, 'with your wife and her two sons.'

Revised English Bible—1989

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, now came to him with his sons and his wife, to the wilderness where he was encamped at the mountain of God. Moses was told, "Here is Jethro, your father-in-law, coming to you with your wife and her two sons."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

Yitro Moshe's father-in-law brought Moshe's sons and wife to him in the desert where he was encamped, at the mountain of God. He sent word to Moshe, "I, your father-in-law Yitro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons."

The Scriptures 1998

Yithro, Mosheh's father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Mosheh in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of Elohim. And he had said to Mosheh, "I, your father-in-law Yithro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her."

Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible

AND JOTHOR THE FATHER-IN-LAW OF MOSES, AND HIS SONS AND HIS WIFE, WENT FORTH TO MOSES INTO THE DESERT, WHERE HE ENCAMPED ON THE MOUNT OF THEOS. AND IT WAS TOLD MOSES, SAYING, "BEHOLD, YOUR FATHER-IN-LAW JOTHOR IS COMING TO YOU, AND YOUR WIFE AND TWO SONS WITH HIM."

Awful Scroll Bible

...even Jethro, to whom Moses is being the son-in-law of, was to come in with his sons and wife to Moses, to the wilderness where he was to camp, at the mount of the of mighty ones. Even was he being the son-in-law to Jethro, to say to Moses: I am coming in with your wife and two sons.

Concordant Literal Version

Now Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, and his sons, and his wife, came to Moses, to the wilderness where he was encamping at the Mount of the One, Elohim. And he

	sent word to Moses: I, your father-in-law, Jethro, am coming to you, and your wife and her two sons with her.
exeGeser's companion Bible	And Yithro, in law of Mosheh,
	comes with his sons and his woman
	to Mosheh into the wilderness,
	where he encamps at the mount of Elohim:
	and he says to Mosheh,
	I, your in law, Yithro come to you
	with your woman and with her two sons.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Yitro, Moshe's khoten, came with his banim and his isha unto Moshe into the
	midbar, where he encamped at the Har HaElohim;
	And he said unto Moshe, I thy khoten (father-in-law) Yitro am come unto thee, and
	thy isha, and her two banim with her.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then Jethro, his father-in-law, came with Moses' sons and his wife to [join] Moses
	in the wilderness where he was camped, at the mountain of God [that is, Mt. Sinai
	in Horeb]. He sent a message to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to
	you with your wife and her two sons [who are] with her."
The Expanded Bible	So Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Moses' wife and his two sons and went to
	Moses. He was camped in the desert [wilderness] near the mountain of God
	[Mount Sinai]. Jethro had sent a message ahead to Moses that said, "I, Jethro,
	your father-in-law, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into
	the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God; for the children of Israel
	had now established their camp in the foot-hills of Mount Horeb. And he said unto
	Moses, sent him a message before reaching the camp, I, thy father-in-law Jethro,
	am come unto thee, and thy wife and her two sons with her.
The Voice	Jethro (Moses' father-in-law) brought Zipporah and her two sons into the desert to
	meet Moses when he and the people of Israel were camped near God's mountain.
	This place is special for Moses, for it was here that he first met God in the burning bush.
	Jethro sent a servant with a message for Moses.
	Jethro (to Moses): I, Jethro, your father-in-law, am coming out to see you and I'm
	bringing your wife and two sons with me.

Bible Translations with an Excess of Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach	Now Moses' father in law, Jethro, and his [Moses'] sons and his wife came to
	Moses, to the desert where he was encamped, to the mountain of God.
	to the desert: [We too know that he was in the desert [without the text stating it
	explicitly], but the text is speaking of Jethro's praise, that he lived amidst the
	greatest honor of the world, but his heart prompted him to go forth to the desert
	wasteland to hear words of Torah. — [from Mechilta]
	And he said to Moses, "I, Jethro, your father in law, am coming to you, and [so is]
	your wife and her two sons with her. "
	And he said to Moses: through a messenger. — [from Mechilta, view of Rabbi Eleazar the Modite]
	I, Jethro, your father-in-law...: If you will not come out for my sake, come out
	for your wife's sake, and if you will not come out for your wife's sake, come out
	for the sake of her two sons. — [from Mechilta]

Kaplan Translation

Jethro came together with [Moses'] wife and sons to the desert, where Moses was staying, near God's mountain. He sent word to Moses: 'I, your father-in-law Jethro, am on my way to you, along with your wife. Her two sons are with her.'

God's mountain

See Exodus 3:1. (Ibn Ezra; Abarbanel).

NET Bible®

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses'⁸ sons and his wife, came to Moses in the desert where he was camping by⁹ the mountain of God.¹⁰ He said¹¹ to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you, along with your wife and her two sons with her."

^{8tn} Heb "his"; the referent (Moses) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

^{9tn} This is an adverbial accusative that defines the place (see GKC 373-74 §118.g).

^{10sn} The mountain of God is Horeb, and so the desert here must be the Sinai desert by it. But chap. 19 suggests that they left Rephidim to go the 24 miles to Sinai. It may be that this chapter fits in chronologically after the move to Sinai, but was placed here thematically. W. C. Kaiser defends the present location of the story by responding to other reasons for the change given by Lightfoot, but does not deal with the travel locations (W. C. Kaiser, Jr., "Exodus," EBC 2:411).

^{11sn} This verse may seem out of place, since the report has already been given that they came to the desert. It begins to provide details of the event that the previous verse summarizes. The announcement in verse 6 may have come in advance by means of a messenger or at the time of arrival, either of which would fit with the attention to formal greetings in verse 7. This would suit a meeting between two important men; the status of Moses has changed. The LXX solves the problem by taking the pronoun "I" as the particle "behold" and reads it this way: "one said to Moses, 'Behold, your father-in-law has come....'"

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and **"Yitro"** ^{His remainder}, in-law of **"Mosheh"** ^{Plucked out}, and his sons and his woman, came to **"Mosheh"** ^{Plucked out}, to the wilderness, where he was camping, there was the hill of the **"Elohiym"** ^{Powers}, and he said to **"Mosheh"** ^{Plucked out}, I am your in-law **"Yitro"** ^{His remainder}, coming to you, and your woman and her two sons with her,...

English Standard Version 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. And when he sent word to Moses, "I, [Hebrew; Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac *behold*] your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her,"

New King James Version ...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. 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."

Young's Updated LT And Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, comes, and his sons, and his wife, unto Moses, unto the wilderness where he is encamping—the mount of God; and he says unto Moses, "I, your father-in-law, Jethro, am coming unto you, and your wife, and her two sons with her."

The gist of this passage: Jethro beings to bring Moses' wife and children to Moses; but then he sends a message ahead, to warn Moses that he is coming.

5-6

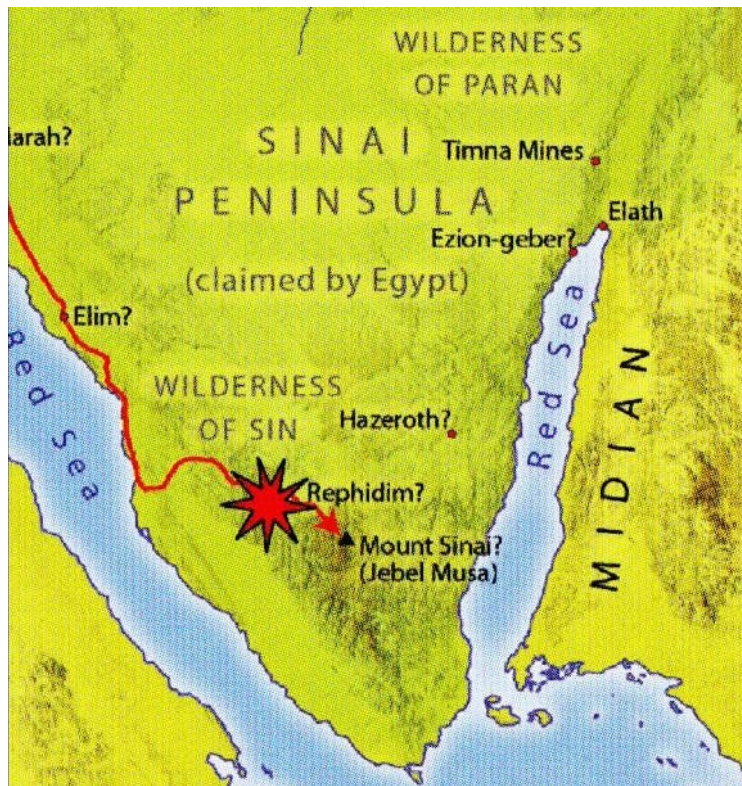
Exodus 18:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (i) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Exodus 18:5a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
Yith ^e rôw (וִּיתִי) [pronounced yihth-ROW]	<i>his abundance; his excellence and is transliterated Jethro, Jether</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3503 BDB #452
chôthên (חָתָן) [pronounced khoh-THAIN]	<i>father-in-law, the wife's father</i>	Qal participle of verb; used as a substantive; masculine singular construct	Strong's #2859 BDB #368
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced moh-SHEH]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bânîym (בָּנִים) [pronounced baw-NEEM]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men; young men, youths</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #802 BDB #61
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced moh-SHEH]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
mid ^e bâr (מִדְבָּר) [pronounced mid ^e -BAWR]	<i>wilderness, unpopulated wilderness, desert wilderness; mouth</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4057 BDB #184

Translation: Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, and Moses' [lit., his] sons and his wife, were coming to Moses, to the desert-wilderness.

After hearing about what had been happening, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came out to where Moses was (which was not too far from Midian). He brought with him Moses' wife and two sons.



The Sinai Peninsula, Rephidim, Mount Sinai (a map); from [God's War Plan](#); accessed June 7, 2023. No one knows where Rephidim or Mount Sinai are. These locations are guesses, and they are not out of line with other guesses.

As an aside, this is quite an interesting [webpage](#), which I have come across quite back accident. The various battles of the Bible are found examined on these [pages](#).

Steven Rudd, who has also put a great deal of study into this, has Rephidim and Sinai in the area named Midian (his map is [here](#) and [here](#)). I lean toward the map which I have included on this page. This map may help with some potential confusion with regards to the next few verses.

Exodus 18:5a [Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, and Moses' \[lit., his\] sons and his wife, were coming to Moses, to the desert-wilderness.](#) (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 18:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER] is actually used in a number of different ways; it can mean <i>that, so that, in that; for that, since; which; when, at what time, while; who; where, wherever; the fact that = how; in order that, because that, because; as, like as; yea, even, yea even; until that; then, so</i> [in an apodosis].			
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced hoo]	<i>he, it; him, himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one); same</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
chânah (חָנָה) [pronounced khaw-NAW]	<i>bivouacking, camping, encamped in [or, against], setting up camp; laying siege to; inclining, declining, bending down</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #2583 BDB #333
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced shawm]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027

The combination ʾăsher + shâm, whether together or not, means *where, in what place, to what place*.

Exodus 18:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
har (הַר) [pronounced <i>har</i>]	<i>hill; mountain, mount; hill-country, a mountainous area, mountain region</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2022 (and #2042) BDB #249
ʾĒlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: While he [Moses] is bivouacking, [at] the mountain of God,...

This phrase begins with the relative pronoun *ʾăsher* (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *uh-SHER*], which means, *that, so that, in that; for that, since; which; when, at what time, while; who; where, wherever; the fact that = how; in order that, because that, because; as, like as; yea, even, yea even; until that; then, so* [in an apodosis]. Strong's #834 BDB #81. The nearest proper noun to *ʾăsher* in context is *Moses* (although Jethro is the subject of the first and third verbs in this passage). Moses is likely the one referred to in v. 5b.

There are two very different ways to interpret this phrase. Either Moses or Jethro is encamped by the mountain of God. If we are to understand that this is Moses (and that appears to be what all translations do⁸), we simply have Moses and the people of Israel encamped, and Jethro is moving toward him. The designation, the Mountain of God, is known previously in Exodus 3:1, 12. Therefore, we do not need the subsequent chapters (Exodus 19–20) to tell us that Moses is encamped by the Mountain of God. What I am saying here is that Exodus 18 belongs right here, chronologically speaking.

The narrative, written by Moses, places himself and the people of Israel at the Mountain of God (Exodus 18:5 19:3, 17). Jethro has Moses' family, and they are camped nearby. Moses, the writer of this history, would be very aware of where he is. We do not know if Jethro understands *where* they all are (which is not really an issue).

Exodus 18:5b ...where he [Moses] was encamped at the mountain of God. (NKJV)

Previous to the context of our narrative, the mountain (or set of mountains) is associated with God. Whether that is related to the burning bush in Exodus 3 or not is not completely clear (my reading of chapter 3 is, this mountain or mountain range was already associated with God before Moses saw the burning bush).

As I see it, Moses is the one camped out by the mountain of God; and it had this designation previously. Although much more conversation could be given to *what if this is Jethro and not Moses being spoken of? Or, could Exodus 18 be out of chronological order?* I have thought about those topics and even written about them, but eventually decided that this discussion was not really profitable (I pretty much deleted that discussion).

Exodus 18:5b ...where he [Moses] was encamped at the mountain of God. (NKJV)

This designation, *mountain of God*, is curious, as Moses has not yet gone to speak to God upon the summit of that mountain. Therefore, there are two options here. (1) This mountain has had this name for quite awhile; and everyone knows it by that name; or (2) Moses is writing this after the fact, knowing all that has taken place, meeting God upon this mountain. (1) is the simplest explanation. (2) would suggest that Moses or Joshua edited the book of Exodus at a later time. I lean toward the simplest explanation.

⁸ If there is an exception to this, I missed it.

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. (NKJV)

Jethro favored Moses and was **grace oriented** himself. He was glad that one of his daughters married him and once all the news got back to Midian, Jethro was pleased to take her back to Moses. He recognized that Moses had a serious part to play in God's plan. Whether Zipporah herself was ever convinced of this, is quite another issue. What she said to her children and her attitude toward Moses could have affected their thinking for decades. This could explain why we hear virtually nothing about these two sons.

We will hear about Moses' brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, throughout the **Pentateuch**. We will also hear a great deal about Aaron's sons (who will continue a priesthood that began with Aaron⁹). We hear nothing about Moses' sons during this time period. They only are mentioned again in genealogies which come much later.

Moses is going one way (more or less) and Jethro appears to approach him from the other direction. They are about to meet up again. At this point in the narrative, they are camped out in separate places. Jethro will not simply walk into the Israelite camp; he will send a message to Moses first (that is what v. 6 is all about).

Exodus 18:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Mosheh (משה) [pronounced moh-SHEH]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
'ânîy (אני) [pronounced aw-NEE]	<i>I, me; in answer to a question, it means I am, it is I</i>	1 st person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
chôthên (חֹתֵן) [pronounced khoh-THAIN]	<i>father-in-law, the wife's father</i>	Qal participle of verb; used as a substantive; masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2859 BDB #368
Yîth ^e rôw (יִתְרוֹ) [pronounced yihth-ROW]	<i>his abundance; his excellence and is transliterated Jethro, Jether</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3503 BDB #452

⁹ We have not covered this yet in the book of Exodus.

Exodus 18:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced boh]	<i>entering [coming, going, advancing] [in]; those entering [going, coming (in)]</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: ...he [Jethro] said to Moses [through a messenger], "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you,...

Jethro, moving along with Zipporah and the two sons, probably figures, "Maybe I should contact Moses in advance and not spring his wife and children on him as a surprise." So he sends messengers ahead. This would have give Moses the opportunity to send the messengers back, saying, "Listen, I have too much on my plate right now. Would you mind keeping her in Midian?" Moses does not send such a message back to Jethro, but Jethro's message allows for that response.

Given that Jethro is not said to be the speaker, but these words begin with *I*, it is reasonable to suppose that a messenger came in to Moses to give him this message. Therefore, it would be reasonable to translate this, *one said to Moses*.

This is clearly a message, because Jethro, in person, would not say to Moses, "*I, your father-in-law Jethro, have come to you.*" V. 6 makes less sense if Jethro is standing right there speaking to Moses (Moses would be looking right at him). However, a message requires Jethro to identify himself.

The beginning of this quote is a disputed reading. The Samaritan, **Septuagint** and Syrian read *Lo, your father-in-law, Jethro, [is] coming to you* instead of *I, your father-in-law, Jethro [am] coming to you*. You might be thinking, examine the verb and that will tell us the subject. Unfortunately *no* because the verb is in the Qal active participle; there is no person or number. However, in the Hebrew, there is the 1st person singular pronoun; so, in the Hebrew, this is clearly *I am coming to you*.

In either case, it is not Jethro who speaks to Moses but someone else comes to Moses and relays to him the words of Jethro. Jethro sent a man ahead to tell Moses to break the ice, so to speak. In the alternative, it could have been one of Moses' G-2 men guarding the perimeter.

Because Jethro was traveling with Moses' estranged wife, it makes sense that Jethro wanted to prepare Moses for their presence.

Exodus 18:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Exodus 18:6b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾīshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	woman, wife	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #802 BDB #61
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
sh ^e nêy (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced sh ^e n-Ā]	two, two of, a pair of, a duo of; both of	dual numeral construct	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
bânîym (בָּנִים) [pronounced baw-NEEM]	sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men; young men, youths	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]	with, at, by, near; like; from	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Translation: ...with your wife and her two sons.”

I left off the final word and its suffix, as that is already a part of the sentence (more or less).

Jethro adds that Moses' wife and sons are there with him.

If Jethro initiated this message (which is most likely), it is because he needs to make certain that he can get through Moses' security system unscathed. Because of the altercation with the Amalekites, Moses had certainly organized some sort of a security system. Therefore, when Jethro or one of his servants came through the lines, Moses was immediately apprised of the situation. The person speaking to Moses in v. 6 is either a servant sent by Jethro; or a messenger from Moses' G2 force. Whatever the case, Moses knows that his father-in-law, and his wife and two sons, are at the perimeter of the Israeli camp.

We have previously discussed whether Moses' wife deserted him or that she was sent back to Midian by Moses. Although I lean toward Zipporah deserting Moses, that interpretation is not set in stone. Based upon everything that we know, including the non-mention of Moses' family in the rest of the Pentateuch, I believe that my explanation is accurate.

Notice that far more is made of Moses reunion with his father-in-law than is made of that with his wife. This is not a male bonding thing (although they were apparently the only males for awhile in that family), but it was a spiritual bonding thing. Jethro and Moses were both spiritually mature and they had much more in common than Moses did with his own wife.

Jethro could relate to what Moses was doing (as much as anyone could); Moses' wife could not.

Exodus 18:5b–6 While he [Moses] is bivouacking, [at] the mountain of God, he [Jethro] said to Moses [through a messenger], “I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you, with your wife and her two sons.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Moses will actually go out to see Jethro in v. 7.

Exodus 18:5–6 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, and Moses' [lit., *his*] sons and his wife, were coming to Moses, to the desert-wilderness. While he [Moses] is bivouacking, [at] the mountain of God, he [Jethro] said to Moses [through a messenger], "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you, with your wife and her two sons." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 18:5–6 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, after hearing all these reports about Moses and what took place in Egypt, set out to come to Moses in the desert-wilderness. While Jethro is bivouacking at the mountain of God, he sent a messenger to Moses, who said, "I am your father-in-law Jethro and I am coming to you; and with me are your two sons and your wife." (Kukis paraphrase)

Apparently Moses is in his tent, and a messenger comes in and delivers the message that his father-in-law is nearby with Moses' wife and his two sons (who are likely adults).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Fellowship between Moses and his father-in-law

And so comes out Moses to meet his father-in-law and so he bows down and so he kisses to him. And so they ask a man to his associate regarding peace. And so they go into the tent. And so recounts Moses to his father-in-law all that had done Y^ehowah to Pharaoh and to Egypt, on account of Israel. All the distress which came upon them in the way. And so delivered them Y^ehowah.

Exodus
18:7–8

Moses came out to meet his father-in-law. He bowed down and he kissed him. Each [man] asks his friend about his welfare. Then they went into the tent [to talk further]. Moses recounted to his father-in-law all that Y^ehowah had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt, on account of Israel; [and] all the distress which came upon them in the way. However, Y^ehowah delivered Israel [lit., *them*].

Upon receiving this message, Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. He bowed before his father-in-law and then kissed him. The men asked one another of their welfare and how they were each doing. Then they went into Moses' tent to talk further. Moses recounted to his father-in-law all that Jehovah had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt—all on account of Israel—and he told him about all the pressure to yield which came upon them in the way. And yet, in all of this, Jehovah delivered Israel out of Egypt.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so comes out Moses to meet his father-in-law and so he bows down and so he kisses to him. And so they ask a man to his associate regarding peace. And so they go into the tent. And so recounts Moses to his father-in-law all that had done Y^ehowah to Pharaoh and to Egypt, on account of Israel. All the distress which came upon them in the way. And so delivered them Y^ehowah.

Dead Sea Scrolls
Targum (Onkelos)

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And Mosheh went forth to meet his father in law, and bowed, and kissed him, and each saluted the other with peace; and they entered the tabernacle. And Mosheh recounted to his father in law all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to Mizraim for Israel's sake; and all the tribulation that they had found upon the way, and how the Lord had delivered them.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

And Mosheh came forth from under the cloud of glory to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him and made him a proselyte; and they asked of each other's welfare, and came to the tabernacle, the house of instruction. And Mosheh

recounted to his father in law all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to the Mizraee on behalf of Israel; all the hardship they had found in the way, at the sea of Suph, and at Marah, and at Rephidim, and how Amalek had fought with them, and the Lord had delivered them.

Revised Douay-Rheims And he went out to meet his kinsman, and worshipped and kissed him: and they saluted one another with words of peace. And when he was come into the tent, Moses told his kinsman all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh, and the Egyptians, in favour of Israel: and all the labour which had befallen them in the journey, and that the Lord had delivered them.

Aramaic ESV of Peshitta Mosha went out to meet his father-in-law, and bowed and kissed him. They asked each other of their welfare, and they came into the tent. Mosha told his father-in-law all that Mar-Yah had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Yisrael's sake, all the hardships that had come on them on the way, and how Mar-Yah delivered them.

Peshitta (Syriac) And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance and kissed him, and they asked each other of their welfare; and they went into the tent. And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that they had suffered on the journey, and how the LORD had delivered them.

Updated Brenton (Greek) And Moses went forth to meet his father-in-law, and did him reverence, and kissed him, and they embraced each other, and he brought them into the tent. And Moses related to his father-in-law all things that the Lord did to Pharaoh and all the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the labour that had befallen them in the way, and that the Lord had rescued them out of the hand of Pharaoh, and out of the hand of the Egyptians.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English And Moses went out to his father-in-law, and went down on his face before him and gave him a kiss; and they said to one another, Are you well? and they came into the tent. And Moses gave his father-in-law an account of all the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians because of Israel, and of all the troubles which had come on them by the way, and how the Lord had given them salvation.

Easy English So Moses went out to meet his wife's father. Moses bent his head and he kissed Jethro. They spoke together and then they went into the tent. Moses told his wife's father about all the things that the LORD had done to Pharaoh. He told him also what the LORD had done to the Egyptians because of the Israelites. He told Jethro about the troubles that had happened to them during the journey. And Moses told him how the LORD had saved his people, the Israelites.

Easy-to-Read Version–2006 So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. Moses bowed down before him and kissed him. The two men asked about each other's health. Then they went into Moses' tent to talk more. Moses told Jethro everything the LORD had done for the Israelites. He told what the LORD did to Pharaoh and the people of Egypt. He told about all the problems they had along the way. And he told his father-in-law how the LORD saved the Israelites every time there was trouble.

Good News Bible (TEV) He had sent word to Moses that they were coming, so Moses went out to meet him, bowed before him, and kissed him. They asked about each other's health and then went into Moses' tent. Moses told Jethro everything that the LORD had done to the king and the people of Egypt in order to rescue the Israelites. He also told him about the hardships the people had faced on the way and how the LORD had saved them. A portion of v. 6 is included for context.

The Message

Moses went out to welcome his father-in-law. He bowed to him and kissed him. Each asked the other how things had been with him. Then they went into the tent. Moses told his father-in-law the story of all that GOD had done to Pharaoh and Egypt in helping Israel, all the trouble they had experienced on the journey, and how GOD had delivered them.

NIRV

So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. Moses bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other. Then they went into the tent. Moses told Jethro everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The LORD did all of this because of how much he loved Israel. Moses told Jethro about all their hard times along the way. He told him about how the LORD had saved them.

New Simplified Bible

Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. Moses bowed with his face touching the ground and kissed Jethro. They asked each other how they were. Then they entered the tent. Moses told his father-in-law everything Jehovah had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel. He talked about all the hardships they had on the way, and how Jehovah saved them.

Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.

When they arrived, Moses went out and bowed down in front of Jethro, then kissed him. After they had greeted each other, they went into the tent, where Moses told him everything the LORD had done to protect Israel against the Egyptians and their king. He also told him how the LORD had helped them in all of their troubles.

The Living Bible

Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and greeted him warmly; they asked about each other's health and then went into Moses' tent to talk further. Moses related to his father-in-law all that had been happening and what the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians in order to deliver Israel, and all the problems there had been along the way, and how the Lord had delivered his people from all of them.

New Berkeley Version

New Life Version

Then Moses went to meet his father-in-law. He bowed down and kissed him. They asked each other if all was well, and went into the tent. Moses told his father-in-law all the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians because of Israel. He told him about how they had suffered on the way, and how the Lord had saved them.

New Living Translation

So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. He bowed low and kissed him. They asked about each other's welfare and then went into Moses' tent. Moses told his father-in-law everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and Egypt on behalf of Israel. He also told about all the hardships they had experienced along the way and how the LORD had rescued his people from all their troubles.

Unlocked Dynamic Bible

So Moses went out of the campsite to meet his father-in-law. He bowed before him and kissed him on the cheek. They both asked each other, "Have you been well?" Then they went into Moses' tent. Moses told Jethro everything that Yahweh had done to the king and all the other people in Egypt in order to help the Israelite people. He also told him about the troubles they had experienced on the way, and about how Yahweh had helped them.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible

Moses went out to meet them. Then [Moses] bowed low before his father-in-law and kissed him, then they hugged each other, and he led them into his tent, where Moses told his father-in-law about everything that Jehovah had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, as well as about all the things that had happened to them along the way, and of the way Jehovah had rescued them from the hands of Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

Beck's American Translation .

Common English Bible .

New Advent (Knox) Bible	Jethro had sent word on to tell Moses who it was that came, and that he had Sephora and her two sons with him; so Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowing low and greeting him with a kiss, and words of peaceful welcome passed between them. Then, within the shelter of his tent, Moses told his father-in-law how the Lord had avenged Israel on Pharaoh and the Egyptians; what hardships they had met on the journey, and how the Lord had sent them relief. V. 6 is included for context.
Translation for Translators	So Moses/I went out of the campsite to meet his/my father-in-law. He/I bowed before him, and kissed him <i>on the cheek</i> . «They both/We» asked each other, “Have you been healthy?” Then they/we went into <i>Moses’/my</i> tent. Moses/I told Jethro everything that Yahweh had done to the king and all the <i>other</i> people in Egypt for the sake of the Israeli people. He/I also told him about the troubles/problems they/we had experienced on the way, and how Yahweh had helped them/us.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia Translation	Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and bowed down and kissed him. They each asked after the other's well-being, and then came into the (command) tent. The bowing and kissing was a ceremonial greeting. Nomads throughout history have strongly stressed hospitality. Arabs lay this stress on hospitality to this day. Moses related to his father-in-law everything that the LORD did to Pharaoh and to Egypt on Israel's account, and all the hard work that had they had had to do along the way, and how the LORD continued to rescue them.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Then Moses went out to meet his father-in—law, and bowed to him and kissed him, and they mutually enquired after their health. Then they came to the tent. Moses there related to his father-in-law all that the EVER-LIVING had done to Pharaoh and to the Mitzeraim on account of Israel; —all the troubles which met them on the road, and how the EVER-LIVING delivered them.
God’s Truth (Tyndale)	And Moses went out to meet his father in law and did obeisance and kissed him, and they saluted each other and came into the tent. And Moses told his father in law all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israels sake, and all the travail that had happened them by the way, and how the Lord had delivered them.
HCSB	So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and then kissed him. They asked each other how they had been [Lit <i>other about well-being</i>] and went into the tent. Moses recounted to his father-in-law all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel’s sake, all the hardships that confronted them on the way, and how the Lord delivered the.
Lexham English Bible	And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and he bowed, and he kissed him, and {they each asked about the other's welfare}, and they came into the tent. And Moses told his father-in-law all that Yahweh had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt on account of Israel, all the hardship that had found them on the way, and [how] Yahweh delivered them.
Urim-Thummim Version	Moses went out to meet his father in law and bowed down, and hugged him and they asked each other how they have faired, and they came into the tent. And Moses told his father in law all that YHWH had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the hardship that had come on them by the way and how YHWH rescued them.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Moses came out towards his father in law, and they bowed down and he kissed him, and each wished the other peace, and they came to the tent. And Moses told his father in law all that Yahweh had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt, for Israel's sake: of all the hardship they encountered along the way, and Yahweh did save them.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowing low before him, he kissed him, and when each had inquired about the other's health, they entered the tent. Moses then told his father-in-law all that Yahweh had done to Pharaoh and Egypt for the sake of Israel and all the difficulties they had met with on the way and how Yahweh had saved them.
The Heritage Bible	And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and prostrated himself, and kissed him; and they asked each man of his neighbor their peace; and they came into the tent. And Moses tallied up to his father in law all that Jehovah had done to Pharaoh, and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the distress that had come upon them by the way, and Jehovah snatched them out.
New American Bible (2002)	Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down before him, and kissed him. Having greeted each other, they went into the tent. Moses then told his father-in-law of all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for the sake of Israel, and of all the hardships they had had to endure on their journey, and how the LORD had come to their rescue.
New RSV	Moses went out to meet his father-in-law; he bowed down and kissed him; each asked after the other's welfare, and they went into the tent. Then Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had beset them on the way, and how the Lord had delivered them.
Revised English Bible—1989	Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed low to him, and kissed him. After they had greeted one another and come into the tent, Moses told him all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt for Israel's sake, and about all their hardships on the journey, and how the LORD had saved them.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Moshe went out to meet his father-in-law, prostrated himself and kissed him. Then, after inquiring of each other's welfare, they entered the tent. Moshe told his father-in-law all that <i>ADONAI</i> had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Isra'el's sake, all the hardships they had suffered while traveling and how <i>ADONAI</i> had rescued them.
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Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	AND MOSES WENT FORTH TO MEET HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, AND DID HIM REVERENCE, AND KISSED HIM, AND THEY EMBRACED EACH OTHER, AND HE BROUGHT THEM INTO THE TENT. AND MOSES RELATED TO HIS FATHER-IN-LAW ALL THINGS THAT JESUS DID TO PHARAOH AND ALL THE EGYPTIANS FOR ISRAEL'S SAKE, AND ALL THE LABOR THAT HAD BEFALLEN THEM IN THE JOURNEY, AND THAT JESUS HAD RESCUED THEM OUT OF THE HAND OF PHARAOH, AND OUT OF THE HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS.
Awful Scroll Bible	Moses was to go out to meet he, to whom he is being son-in-law of, and was to bow down and was to kiss him. They were to ask each the other of their welfare, and they were to come into the tent. Moses was to recount to he, to whom he is being son-in-law of, what Jehovah is to have done to Pharaoh and Egypt, for Isra-el's cause; and the hardships they are to have come upon in the journey, even that Jehovah was to rescue them out.
Concordant Literal Version	Then Moses went forth to meet his father-in-law; and he bowed himself down and kissed him. After they had asked, each man of his associate, concerning his welfare, then they came to the tent, and Moses related to his father-in-law all that

exeGesex companion Bible	<p>Yahweh had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt concerning Israel, all the suspense which found them along the way and how Yahweh had rescued them.</p> <p>And Mosheh goes to meet his in law and prostrates and kisses him; and they ask man to friend of their shalom; and they come into the tent: and Mosheh describes to his in law all Yah Veh worked to Paroh and to the Misrayim for sake of Yisra El and all the travail that found them by the way and how Yah Veh rescued them.</p>
Orthodox Jewish Bible	<p>And Moshe went out to meet his khoten, bowed low, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their shalom (welfare); and they came into the ohel.</p> <p>And Moshe told his khoten all that Hashem had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for the sake of Yisroel, and all the travail that had befallen them along the derech, and how Hashem saved and delivered them.</p>

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	<p>So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and he bowed down [in respect] and kissed him. They asked each other about their well-being and went into the tent. Moses told his father-in-law about all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and about all the hardship that had happened during the journey, and how the Lord had rescued them.</p>
The Expanded Bible	<p>So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. After the two men asked about each other's ·health [well-being], they went into Moses' tent. Moses told his father-in-law everything the Lord had done to ·the king [Pharaoh] and the Egyptians to help Israel. He told about all the ·problems [hardship] they had faced along the way and how the Lord had saved them.</p>
Kretzmann's Commentary	<p>And Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake while they were still in bondage in Egypt, and all the travail that had come upon them, that had found or struck them, by the way, since their departure out of Egypt, and how the Lord delivered them, how He had shown them His salvation in every instance, given them evidence of His almighty and gracious presence. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. It was not the mere polite interest of a visitor, but the genuine, sympathetic rejoicing of a man who felt that the God of Israel was the true God. Jethro here appears as the representative of a heathen nation, of the Midianites or Kenites, the first heathen nation to show kindness to the people of God.</p>
The Voice	<p>So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. When he saw him, he bowed down <i>before Jethro</i> and kissed him. They each asked how the other was doing, and then they went into Moses' tent.</p> <p>Moses told Jethro <i>the whole story</i>. <i>He told him</i> everything that the Eternal had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians on behalf of Israel. <i>He told him</i> about all the <i>misery and tribulations</i> they had run into during their long journey. <i>And then he told</i> how the Eternal had rescued them.</p>

Bible Translations with an Excess of Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach	<p>So Moses went out toward Jethro, prostrated himself and kissed him, and they greeted one another, and they entered the tent.</p>
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So Moses went out: Jethro was afforded great honor at that time. Since Moses went out, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu also went out, and who [was it who] saw these [men] going out and did not go out? [Thus, everyone went out to greet Jethro.]-[from unknown midrashic source similar to Mechilta and Tanchuma Yithro 6]

prostrated himself and kissed him: I do not know who prostrated himself to whom. [But] when it says, "one another (וְהֵעָרְל שֵׁיָא)" [lit., a man to his friend,] who is called "a man"? This is Moses, as it is said: "But the man (שֵׁיָאָהוּ) Moses" (Num. 12:3). [from Mechilta]

Moses told his father in law [about] all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians on account of Israel, [and about] all the hardships that had befallen them on the way, and [that] the Lord had saved them.

Moses told his father-in-law: to attract his heart, to draw him near to the Torah. — [from Mechilta]

all the hardships: By the sea and [the hardship] of Amalek. — [from Mechilta]

the hardships: Heb. הֶאֱלָתָה. "Lammed aleph" comprise the root of the word. The "tav" is both formative and basic and sometimes is omitted from it. Similarly, separation (הִמּוֹתָה), waving (הִפּוֹנָה), rising (הִמּוֹקָה), removing (הִאֲנָה).

Kaplan Translation

Moses went out to greet his father-in-law, bowing down low and kissing him. They asked about each other's welfare and went into the tent. Moses told his father-in-law about all that God had done to Pharaoh and Egypt for the sake of Israel, as well as all the frustrations they had encountered on the way, and [how] God had rescued them.

frustrations

(Radak, Sherashim). T'la'ah in Hebrew. Or, 'hardships.'

NET Bible®

Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him;¹² they each asked about the other's welfare, and then they went into the tent. Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt for Israel's sake, and all the hardship¹³ that had come on them¹⁴ along the way, and how¹⁵ the Lord had delivered them.

^{12sn} This is more than polite oriental custom. Jethro was Moses' benefactor, father-in-law, and a priest. He paid much respect to him. Now he could invite Jethro into his home (see B. Jacob, Exodus, 496).

^{13tn} A rare word, "weariness" of the hardships.

^{14tn} Heb "found them."

^{15tn} Here "how" has been supplied.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and "**Mosheh** ^{Plucked outⁿ} went out to meet his in-law, and he bent himself down and he kissed him, and (each) enquired to his companion according to the completeness, and they came unto the tent, and "**Mosheh** ^{Plucked outⁿ} [recounted] to his in-law all which "**YHWH** ^{He isⁿ} did to "**Paroh** ^{Great houseⁿ} and to "**Mits'rayim** ^{Two straitsⁿ} <on account of> "Yisra'el ^{He turns El asideⁿ}, all the trouble which found them in the road, and "**YHWH** ^{He isⁿ} delivered them,...

Charles Thompson OT

Moses went out to meet his father in law and made obeisance to him and kissed him. And when they had embraced each other he conducted them to his tent. And Moses told his father in law all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to all the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the difficulties which they had encountered on the way, and how the Lord had rescued them out of the hand of Pharaoh and out of the hand of the Egyptians.

Modern English Version

Then Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and bowed down and kissed him; and they asked each other of the other's welfare, and then they went into the tent.

Third Millennium Bible	Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the hardships that had come on them along the way, and how the LORD delivered them.
Young's Updated LT	And Moses 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. And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the LORD delivered them.
	And Moses goes out to meet his father-in-law, and bows himself, and kisses him, and they ask one at another of welfare, and come into the tent; and Moses recounts to his father-in-law all that Jehovah has done to Pharaoh, and to the Egyptians, on account of Israel, all the travail which has found them in the way, and Jehovah does deliver them.

The gist of this passage: Moses goes out to meet his father-in-law, to whom he is very respectful. He tells Jethro all that God has done on behalf of Israel.

7-8

Exodus 18:7a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i>]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qârâ' (אָרַךְ) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to encounter, to befall, to meet; to assemble [for the purpose of encountering God or exegeting His Word]; to come, to assemble</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7122 & #7125 BDB #896
chôthên (חָתָן) [pronounced <i>khoh-THAIN</i>]	<i>father-in-law, the wife's father</i>	Qal participle of verb; used as a substantive; masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2859 BDB #368

Translation: Moses came out to meet his father-in-law.

Therefore, Moses goes out to meet his father-in-law. Moses is going toward Jethro while Jethro is just outside the Israeli camp.

You may recall that Moses did not tell his father-in-law exactly why he was returning to Egypt. Moses apparently did not go to his father-in-law and say, "I have just spoken with God, and God wants me to return to Egypt." Moses was far more circumspect than that.

Therefore, at this time, Moses will give a much longer explanation and recounting of all that took place. Before, Moses was reasonably concerned that Jethro would think him a nutcase if he said, "God spoke to me out in the desert-wilderness, and now I need to go and free my people." Moses simply was not going to say something like that to his father-in-law. However, now that it has all happened, and his father-in-law knows some of the details, Moses can relay the entire story.

I believe this short passage barely summarizes what Moses said, but that this conversation could have taken an hour or two.

Exodus 18:7b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâchah (שָׁחָה) [pronounced shaw-KHAW]	<i>to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to do obeisance to; to honor [with prayers]; to do homage to, to submit to</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #7812 BDB #1005

Translation: He bowed down...

One commentator says that he does not know who bowed down to who. So, remember the rule, when we have a sentence where there is not a specified subject. Who was the subject of the verb previous to this one? Who is the subject of the next verb? Moses is the subject of the verb in v. 7a; he is the subject of the verb in v. 8a; therefore, we should understand that Moses is bowing down to his father-in-law and not the other way around. Moses had great respect for this man. Furthermore, Moses was a man of great humility. His position as ruler/leader over Israel did not go to his head.

Exodus 18:7c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâshaq (נָשָׁק) [pronounced naw-SHAHK]	<i>to kiss, to touch, to have close contact with; to equip, to arm</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5401 BDB #676
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: ...and he kissed him.

This tradition of men kissing has gone by the wayside, for the most part; which I am quite happy about. Two men shaking hands is much more sensible to me. However, that was the culture at that time.

Exodus 18:7d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâ'al (שָׁאַל) [pronounced shaw-AHL]	<i>to ask [petition, request, inquire]; to demand [require]; to question, to interrogate; to ask [for a loan]; to consult; to salute</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7592 BDB #981
îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, each man, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
rêa' (עָרַךְ) [pronounced RAY-ahg]	<i>associate, neighbor, colleague; companion, friend; beloved; fellow, acquaintance; fellow citizen; another person; one, another [in a reciprocal phrase]</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7453 BDB #945
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by; on account of; about, concerning</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
shâlôwm (שְׁלוֹמִי) or shâlôm (שְׁלֹמִי) [pronounced shaw-LOHM]	<i>completeness, soundness, health and welfare, well, in good health; peace, prosperity, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7965 BDB #1022

Translation: Each [man] asks his friend about his welfare.

Each man asked about the other's health and welfare.

Moses and his father-in-law, although they had seen one another a few months back (less than six) the men had a close friendship developed over the 40 years that Moses was in Midian. Jethro was, in a sense, Moses' spiritual father. Nothing is said about Moses and his wife who deserted him or Moses and his children—but a great deal is made of his reunion with Jethro.

It is fascinating that nothing is said about Moses and his wife and sons. It seems reasonable that they greeted one another and that he kissed his two sons. No doubt, Moses shows them whatever affection is appropriate, but none of this is conveyed in the narrative. However, Moses' great enthusiasm is to share what has happened with his father-in-law. This enthusiasm is shared, apparently, by Jethro, but not by the others.

Exodus 18:7e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'ohel (אֹהֶל) [pronounced OH-heh]	<i>tent, tabernacle, house, temporary dwelling</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article; with the directional hê	Strong's #168 BDB #13

The directional hê (properly, the directive hê) is the âh (ה) ending to a noun, usually found after a verb of motion. This is called the *directive hê* or the *hê locale*, which often indicates direction and puts somewhat of an adverbial spin on the noun. Essentially, it answers the question *where?* The pronunciation of the word does not change. The directional hê indicates the direction in which something moves. It is often used with the noun *heaven* and the most literal rendering in the English would be *heavenward*. We can also indicate the existence of the hê directional by supplying the prepositions *to* or *toward*.

Translation: *Then they went into the tent [to talk further].*

Moses had a great relationship with his father-in-law; so they went into his tent to talk further about things. Jethro and Moses have a great deal to talk about. We have no idea about Moses' interaction with his wife or sons.

Jethro would have been very glad to hear about what the God of Moses had done. His wife, apparently, did not share her father's interest.

Exodus 18:7 *Moses came out to meet his father-in-law. He bowed down and he kissed him. Each [man] asks his friend about his welfare. Then they went into the tent [to talk further].* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

It is apparent that Moses had a great relationship with his father-in-law, but not so much with his wife and sons.

Exodus 18:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
çâphar (סָפַר) [pronounced saw-FAHR]	<i>to recount, to enumerate, to tell with praise, to celebrate, to recall, to declare, to narrate, to tell or declare something from memory, to declare the facts or particulars of, to tell in a specific order</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #5608 BDB #707

Exodus 18:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced moh-SHEH]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
chôthên (חָתָן) [pronounced khoh-THAIN]	<i>father-in-law, the wife's father</i>	Qal participle of verb; used as a substantive; masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2859 BDB #368
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כָּל) [pronounced koh]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, kôl 'âsher mean <i>all which, all whom, all that [which]; whomever, whatever, whatever else, all whose, all where, wherever</i> .			
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to produce, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
par ^e ôh (פָּרֹחַ) [pronounced pah ^e -ĠOH]	<i>great house; possibly hair head (indicating one of great age and therefore with wisdom and authority); transliterated pharaoh</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6547 BDB #829
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Mits ^e rayim (מִצְרַיִם) [pronounced mits-RAH-yim]	<i>double straights; transliterated Mizraim; also Egypt, Egyptians</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #4714 BDB #595

Translation: Moses recounted to his father-in-law all that Y^ehowah had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt,...

When Moses took his leave of Jethro, he did not tell him, apparently, about the burning bush or what God had called him to do. I would not be surprised if Moses felt all of it to be a bit surreal, and that telling Jethro might have been premature. Back then, Moses himself may not have been fully on board with **God's plan**. He may have had considerable doubt. Therefore, Moses apparently never told Jethro, "I am going to Egypt because I am on a mission for God." But, now that everything is accomplished, and now that Jethro knows, through the news, some of what has happened, Moses is more at ease with sharing all of what happened.

Jethro would have heard some details about what happened to Egypt; but he did not have the complete picture. Moses was able to fill him in on all that God did.

What Jethro had heard was second hand, and, no doubt, it seemed too fantastic not to have been exaggerated. There is nothing like hearing it from one who was there and a participant in all of the events. Moses had become pretty enthusiastic about the deliverance effected by Y^ehowah on behalf of the Hebrews.

Exodus 18:8b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
ʾôwdôth (אוֹדוֹת) [pronounced <i>oh-DOTH</i>]	<i>cause, reason for; the occasion of; causes, circumstances; properly turnings</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #182 BDB #15
Together, ʿal ʾôwdôth (עַל אוֹדוֹת) [pronounced <i>gahl-oh-DOTH</i>] mean <i>on account of the causes, on account of; because of; concerning; on the occasion of; concerning the circumstances of; about</i> . With the 1 st person singular suffix, <i>for my sake</i> .			
Yis ^e râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i>]	<i>God prevails; contender; soldier of God; transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun; God-given name to Jacob; and national name for the Jewish people	Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975

Translation: ...on account of Israel;...

God did all of this for Israel. God has promises which He made to **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**; and those promises still stand, even though Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are long gone.

Exodus 18:8c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

Exodus 18:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
telâ'âh (תֵּלְאָה) [pronounced <i>tel-aw-AW</i>]	<i>toil, hardship, distress, weariness; travail, trouble</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8513 BDB #521
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
mâtsâ' (מָצָא) [pronounced <i>maw-TSAW</i>]	<i>to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover; to meet (encounter)</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
bê (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
derek ^e (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced <i>DEH-rek^e</i>]	<i>way, distance, road, path; journey, course; direction, towards; manner, habit, way [of life]; of moral character</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1870 BDB #202

Translation: ...[and] all the distress which came upon them in the way.

There is a technical use of this word, *the way*, which speaks of the **spiritual life** of believer in the time of Israel. However, here, it simply refers to events which transpired as Moses interacted with the Pharaoh.

At any time, Pharaoh could have ended the suffering. He had the volition at any time to submit to God. This was just too far from where his head was at, regardless of all the **signs and wonders** that he observed.

Exodus 18:8d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâtsal (נָצַל) [pronounced <i>naw-TSAHL</i>]	<i>to snatch away, to deliver, to rescue, to snatch out of danger, to preserve, to recover</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5337 BDB #664
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: However, Y^ehowah delivered Israel [lit., *them*].

In all that happened, God delivered Israel out of Egypt. This is all quite recent to Moses. Even though Moses worked closely with his brother and possibly his sister, they had not seen one another for at least forty years.

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, was more like family to him. They seemed to vibe along the same wavelength, more so than Moses and anyone else whom he knew there. Therefore, Moses was extremely open and enthusiastic about sharing what happened when speaking with Jethro.

Bear in mind, only a few months have passed since Moses left Midian for Egypt. Some of the greatest events in Israel's history took place in about a six-month period of time (leaving Egypt, leaving slavery, following God to Mount Sinai, and then Moses receiving the **Law of God**¹⁰).

Exodus 18:8 Moses recounted to his father-in-law all that Y^ehowah had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt, on account of Israel; [and] all the distress which came upon them in the way. However, Y^ehowah delivered Israel [lit., *them*]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

God has used Moses in a tremendous way, and his life for the past few months has been quite incredible.

Moses is quite pleased to have someone to share all of these things with. Jethro was more family to Moses and closer to Moses than anyone else that Moses knew. Remember, Moses has lived with this man and his daughters for the past 40 years. Moses married one of the daughters. Even though this marriage was not the greatest marriage ever, Moses was very close with his father-in-law.

Exodus 18:7–8 Moses came out to meet his father-in-law. He bowed down and he kissed him. Each [man] asks his friend about his welfare. Then they went into the tent [to talk further]. Moses recounted to his father-in-law all that Y^ehowah had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt, on account of Israel; [and] all the distress which came upon them in the way. However, Y^ehowah delivered Israel [lit., *them*]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 18:7–8 Upon receiving this message, Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. He bowed before his father-in-law and then kissed him. The men asked one another of their welfare and how they were each doing. Then they went into Moses' tent to talk further. Moses recounted to his father-in-law all that Jehovah had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt—all on account of Israel—and he told him about all the pressure to yield which came upon them in the way. And yet, in all of this, Jehovah delivered Israel out of Egypt. (Kukis paraphrase)

I have difficulty translating and therefore understanding the final phrase.

And so rejoices Jethro over all the good which has done Y^ehowah for Israel, in that He rescued them from a hand of Egypt. And says Jethro, "Celebrated is Y^ehowah, that He rescued you [all] from a hand of Egypt and from a hand of Pharaoh, who rescued the people from under a hand of Egypt. And now I have known that greater [is] Y^ehowah more than all the gods, for the word which they acted arrogantly against them."

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Jethro rejoices over all the good that Y^ehowah has done for Israel, in that He rescued them from the hand of Egypt. Jethro then said, "Praise is to Y^ehowah, for He rescued you [all] from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of Pharaoh, Who rescued the people from [being] under the boot [lit., *hand*] of Egypt. And now I know that Y^ehowah is greater than all [other] gods, for in the thing that [took place], they acted arrogantly against them."

Jethro, with Moses, rejoices over all the good that Jehovah was done for Israel, in that He rescued them from Egyptian control. He said, "Praise to Jehovah, for He rescued you from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of Pharaoh. He rescued your people from being under the boot of Egyptian tyranny. It is clear to me that Jehovah is greater than all other gods; and it is clear that Egypt acted with arrogance against the people of Israel."

¹⁰ We are not yet up to this last event in our study.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so rejoices Jethro over all the good which has done Y ^e howah for Israel, in that He rescued them from a hand of Egypt. And says Jethro, "Celebrated is Y ^e howah, that He rescued you [all] from a hand of Egypt and from a hand of Pharaoh, who rescued the people from under a hand of Egypt. And now I have known that greater [is] Y ^e howah more than all the gods, for the word which they acted arrogantly against them."
Dead Sea Scrolls Targum (Onkelos)	. And Jethro was glad over all the good which the Lord, who had saved him from the hand of Mizraim, had wrought for Israel. And Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Mizraee, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and hath delivered the people from under the domination of the Mizraee. Now know I that the Lord is great, and that there is no God but He for by the thing by which the Mizraee had thought to punish (judge) Israel, they themselves are punished.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jethro rejoiced over all the good which the Lord had done unto Israel, and that He had given them manna, and the well, and that he had saved them from the hand of the Mizraee. And Jethro said, Blessed be the Name of the Lord who hath saved you from the hand of the Mizraee, and from the hand of Pharaoh, and hath saved the people from under the tyranny of the Mizraee. Now have I known that the Lord is stronger than all gods; for by the very thing by which the Mizraee wickedly would have punished Israel by (drowning them in) the sea, upon themselves came the punishment, in being punished in the sea.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Jethro rejoiced for all the good things that the Lord had done to Israel, because he had delivered them out of the hands of the Egyptians. And he said: Blessed is the Lord, who has delivered you out of the hand of Pharaoh, and out of the hand of the Egyptians, who has delivered his people out of the hand of Egypt. Now I know that the Lord is great above all gods: because they dealt proudly against them.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Yethro rejoiced for all the goodness which Mar-Yah had done to Yisrael, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians. Yethro said, "Blessed be Mar-Yah, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh; who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that Mar-Yah is greater than all deities because of the thing in which they dealt arrogantly against them."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, because he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh. And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, for he has delivered his people from under the rule of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods; for despite the counsel which the Egyptians had devised against them, he triumphed over them.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And Jothor was amazed at all the good things which the Lord did to them, forasmuch as he rescued them out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh. And Jothor said, Blessed be the Lord, because he has rescued them out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh. Now know I that the Lord is great above all gods, because of this, wherein they attacked them.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Jethro was glad because the Lord had been good to Israel, freeing them from the power of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Praise be to the Lord, who has taken you out of the hand of Pharaoh and out of the hand of the Egyptians; freeing the people from the yoke of the Egyptians. Now I am certain that the Lord is greater than all gods, for he has overcome them in their pride.
Easy English	Jethro was very happy to listen to Moses. Moses repeated to him how the LORD had saved the Israelites from the authority of the Egyptians. Jethro said: 'Let us thank the LORD, who saved you from the authority of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. He saved all the people also from the authority of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods. The LORD did these things to the people who were cruel towards the Israelites.'
Easy-to-Read Version—2006	Jethro was happy when he heard all the good things the LORD had done for Israel. He was glad that the Lord had freed the Israelites from the Egyptians. He said, "Praise the LORD! He freed you from the power of Egypt. He saved you from Pharaoh. Now I know the LORD is greater than all the gods. They thought they were in control, but look what God did!"
Good News Bible (TEV)	When Jethro heard all this, he was happy and said, "Praise the LORD, who saved you from the king and the people of Egypt! Praise the LORD, who saved his people from slavery! Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods, because he did this when the Egyptians treated the Israelites with such contempt."
<i>The Message</i>	Jethro was delighted in all the good that GOD had done for Israel in delivering them from Egyptian oppression. Jethro said, "Blessed be GOD who has delivered you from the power of Egypt and Pharaoh, who has delivered his people from the oppression of Egypt. Now I know that GOD is greater than all gods because he's done this to all those who treated Israel arrogantly."
NIRV	Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel. He heard about how God had saved them from the power of the Egyptians. He said, "I praise the LORD. He saved you and your people from the power of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods. See what he did to those who looked down on Israel."
New Simplified Bible	Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness Jehovah had done to Israel, in delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians. Jethro said: »Blessed be Jehovah who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh. He delivered the people from under the domination of the Egyptians. »Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all the other gods. It was proven when they treated the people with contempt.«

Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Jethro was so pleased to hear this good news about what the LORD had done, that he shouted, "Praise the LORD! He rescued you and the Israelites from the Egyptians and their king. Now I know that the LORD is the greatest God, because he has rescued Israel from their arrogant enemies."
The Living Bible	Jethro was very happy about everything the Lord had done for Israel, and about his bringing them out of Egypt. "Bless the Lord," Jethro said, "for he has saved you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh, and has rescued Israel. I know now that the Lord is greater than any other god because he delivered his people from the proud and cruel Egyptians."
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	Jethro was glad because of all the good things the Lord had done for Israel in saving them from the hand of the Egyptians. So Jethro said, "Honor and thanks be to the Lord, Who saved you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, and Who made you free from the power of Egypt. Now I know that the

New Living Translation	<p>Lord is greater than all the gods. It was proven when they acted in their pride against the people.”</p> <p>Jethro was delighted when he heard about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel as he rescued them from the hand of the Egyptians.</p> <p>“Praise the LORD,” Jethro said, “for he has rescued you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh. Yes, he has rescued Israel from the powerful hand of Egypt! I know now that the LORD is greater than all other gods, because he rescued his people from the oppression of the proud Egyptians.”</p>
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	<p>Jethro was happy when he heard all that Yahweh had done for the Israelite people. He said, “Praise Yahweh, who has rescued you from the power of the Egyptian army, and out of the power of the king of the Egyptians (who is called Pharaoh), and has set the Israelites free from the control of the Egyptian people! Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all other gods because he rescued you from the power of the proud Egyptians when they were causing you to suffer.”</p>

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	<p>Well, His Excellence was amazed by all the good things that Jehovah had done for them by rescuing them, and he said:</p> <p>‘Praise Jehovah, because He rescued them from the hands of Pharaoh and the Egyptians! Now I now know that Jehovah is higher than all [other] gods; for He did this to those who were treating [the children of IsraEl so poorly].’</p>
Beck’s American Translation	
Common English Bible	<p>Jethro was glad about all the good things that the Lord had done for Israel in saving them from the Egyptians’ power.</p> <p>Jethro said, “Bless the Lord who rescued you from the Egyptians’ power and from Pharaoh’s power, who rescued the people from Egypt’s oppressive power. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods, because of what happened when the Egyptians plotted against them.”</p>
New Advent (Knox) Bible	<p>The story of the Lord’s mercies to an oppressed people in delivering them from the power of Egypt rejoiced Jethro’s heart; 10 Blessed be the Lord, he said, who has brought you deliverance when you lay in the power of Pharaoh and of the Egyptians! Blessed be the Lord, who has put an end to your slavery in Egypt! Now I know for certain that the Lord is greater than all other gods! An ill day for the Egyptians when they wronged you![1]</p> <p>[1] ‘An ill day for the Egyptians when they wronged you’; literally, ‘for the reason that they acted proudly against them’. The Hebrew text perhaps means ‘because in the very matter in which they acted proudly (he was) above them’, but it seems probable that it is slightly corrupt.</p>
Translation for Translators	<p>Jethro rejoiced when he heard all that Yahweh had done for the Israeli people. He said, “Praise Yahweh, who has rescued you from the powerful [MTY] Egyptian king and his army! Now I realize that Yahweh is greater than all other gods, because he rescued you all from the power [MTY] of the proud Egyptians when <i>they</i> were causing you <i>to suffer</i>.”</p>

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia Translation	<p>Jethro cheered strongly for all the good that the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had rescued from the hand of Egypt. Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD, Who has rescued you from the hand of Egypt, and from the hand of Pharaoh, and Who has rescued the people from under the hand of Egypt. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods, for He repaid them in full for their arrogance."</p>
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	<p>And Jethro was glad at all the good which the EVER-LIVING had done to Israel, and His redemption of them from the hand of the Bless the EVER-LIVING Who has</p>

delivered you from the hand of the Mitzerain and from the hand of Pharaoh, and Who has delivered this People from under the hand of the Mitzerites. Now you can perceive how much greater the EVER-LIVING is, than all their Gods, by the events with which He overwhelmed them."

God's Truth (Tyndale)
HCSB

Jethro rejoiced over all the good things the LORD had done for Israel when He rescued them from the power of the Egyptians. "Praise the LORD," Jethro exclaimed, "who rescued you from Pharaoh and the power of the Egyptians and snatched the people from the power of the Egyptians. Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all gods, because He did wonders when the Egyptians acted arrogantly against Israel." [Hb obscure]

Jubilee Bible 2000

And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods; for in the thing in which they dealt proudly *he prevailed* against them.

Urim-Thummim Version

Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness that YHWH had accomplished for Israel, whom He had rescued from the hands of the Egyptians. Then Jethro said, blessed is YHWH who has rescued you from the hands of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, who has rescued the people from under the hands of the Egyptians. Now I know that YHWH is greater than all the elohim, for in this thing they have acted proudly but He is above them!

Wikipedia Bible Project

And Jethro hearkened to all the good that Yahweh had done for Israel, that he had rescued her from the hand of Egypt. And Jethro said, "Blessed is Yahweh, who rescued you from Egypt's hand and from Pharaoh's hand, who rescued the people from under Egypt's hand. Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all the gods, because of the things that befell them."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) Jethro rejoiced at all Yahweh's goodness to Israel in freeing them from the power of Egypt and he said, "Blessed be Yahweh who has delivered you from the power of Egypt and Pharaoh, and has rescued the people from the grip of Egypt. I know now that Yahweh is greater than all the gods, for he delivered his people when they were being oppressed."

The Heritage Bible

And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which Jehovah had done to Israel, whom he had snatched out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed is Jehovah, who has snatched you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who has snatched the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know by seeing that Jehovah is greater than all gods, because the word in which they boiled over he was above them.

New American Bible (2002)

Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness that the LORD had shown Israel in rescuing them from the hands of the Egyptians. "Blessed be the LORD," he said, "who has rescued his people from the hands of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is a deity great beyond any other; for he took occasion of their being dealt with insolently to deliver the people from the power of the Egyptians."

New English Bible—1970

Jethro rejoiced at all the good the LORD had done for Israel in saving them from the power of Egypt. He said, 'Blessed be the LORD who has saved you from the power of Egypt and of Pharaoh. Now I know that the LORD is the greatest of all gods, because he has delivered the people from the power of the Egyptians who dealt so arrogantly with them.'

New Jerusalem Bible

And Jethro was delighted at all Yahweh's goodness to Israel in having rescued them from the clutches of the Egyptians. 'Blessed be Yahweh', Jethro exclaimed, 'for

having rescued you from the clutches of the Egyptians and the clutches of Pharaoh, for having rescued the people from the grasp of the Egyptians! Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all other gods. . .'

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Yitro rejoiced over all the good that <i>ADONAI</i> had done for Isra'el by rescuing them from the Egyptians. Yitro said, "Blessed be <i>ADONAI</i> , who has rescued you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh, who has rescued the people from the harsh hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that Adonai is greater than all other gods, because he rescued those who were treated so arrogantly."
Hebraic Roots Bible	And Jethro rejoiced regarding all the good which YAHWEH had done to Israel whom He had delivered from the hand of Egypt. And Jethro said, Blessed be YAHWEH who has delivered you from the hand of Egypt, and from the hand of Pharaoh; He who delivered the people from under the hand of Egypt. Now I know that YAHWEH is greater than all the Elohim; truly, in the way in which He acted proudly against them.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And Yithro rejoiced for all the good which הוה had done for Yisra'el, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Mitsrites. And Yithro said, "Blessed be הוה, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Mitsrites and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Mitsrites. "Now I know that הוה is greater than all the mighty ones, indeed in the matter in which they acted proudly, above them."

Weird English, 𐤀𐤋𐤅𐤁 English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	AND JOTHOR WAS AMAZED AT ALL THE GOOD THINGS WHICH JESUS DID TO THEM, INASMUCH AS HE RESCUED THEM OUT OF THE HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS AND OUT OF THE HAND OF PHARAOH. AND JOTHOR SAID, "BLESSED BE JESUS, BECAUSE HE HAS RESCUED THEM OUT OF THE HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS AND OUT OF THE HAND OF PHARAOH. †(<i>"Blessed" is G2128 which is related to G2127 and G2129. "Blessed Be JE" here is very closely related to "EL-E-LU-JE" shouted by the Saints in Heaven in Rev. 19:1</i>) NOW KNOW I THAT JESUS IS GREAT ABOVE ALL DEITIES/GODS, BECAUSE OF THIS, WHEREIN THEY ATTACKED THEM.
Awful Scroll Bible	Jethro was to rejoice, for the benefit which Jehovah is to have prepared to Isra-el, whom he is to have rescued out of the hand of Egypt. Jethro was to say: Being acclaimed is Jehovah, for he is to have rescued you out from the hand of Egypt, and the hand of Pharaoh; he is to have rescued his people from the hand of Egypt. I am to have learned, that Jehovah is greater than any of they he of mighty ones; for the concern that they have acted proudly!
Concordant Literal Version	So Jethro exhilarated over all the good which Yahweh had done to Israel, whom He had rescued from the hand of Egypt. Hence Jethro said: Blessed be Yahweh Who has rescued you from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of Pharaoh, Who has rescued the people from under the hand of Egypt. Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all the elohim, yea in the matter in which they were arrogant against them.
exeGesés companion Bible	And Yithro rejoices for all the goodness Yah Veh worked to Yisra El whom he rescued from the hand of the Misrayim: and Yithro says, Blessed - Yah Veh, who rescued you from the hand of the Misrayim and from the hand of Paroh; who rescued the people

from under the hand of the Misrayim.
 Now I know
 Yah Veh is greater than all elohim:
 for in the word wherein they seethe
 he is above them.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And Yitro rejoiced for all the tovah which Hashem had done for Yisroel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians.
 And Yitro said, Baruch Hashem, Who hath rescued you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and Who hath delivered HaAm from under the hand of the Egyptians.
 Now I have da'as that Hashem is gadol than kol haelohim; for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible

Jethro rejoiced over all the good things the Lord had done to Israel, in that He had rescued them from the hand of the Egyptians. Jethro said, "Blessed be the Lord, who has rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, and who has rescued the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is ^[a]greater than all gods; indeed, it was proven when they acted insolently toward Israel [and the Lord showed Himself infinitely superior to all their gods]."

^[a] Jethro is affirming that the Lord (Yahweh) proved Himself superior over the Egyptian deities in the plagues and the exodus.

The Expanded Bible

Jethro ·was very happy to hear [rejoiced concerning] all the good things the Lord had done for Israel when he had saved them from the Egyptians. He said, "·Praise [Blessed be] the Lord. He has saved you from the [· hand of the] Egyptians and [· the hand of] ·their king [· Pharaoh], and he has saved the people from the ·power [· hand] of the Egyptians. Now I know the Lord is greater than all gods, because he did this to those who ·looked down on Israel [treated Israel with insolence/arrogance]."

Kretzmann's Commentary

And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. It was not the mere polite interest of a visitor, but the genuine, sympathetic rejoicing of a man who felt that the God of Israel was the true God. Jethro here appears as the representative of a heathen nation, of the Midianites or Kenites, the first heathen nation to show kindness to the people of God. And Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord, Jehovah, the true God, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians; it had been a salvation from galling bondage. Now I know that the Lord, Jehovah, the God whom Moses and the children of Israel worshiped, is greater than all gods, having manifested Himself as being exalted above all so-called gods, the idols of the heathen; for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them.

The Egyptians, foolishly trusting in their idols, had acted wickedly in all their dealings with the Israelites, but the Lord had shown His superiority in the plagues which He had sent, down to the final annihilation of Pharaoh's host in the Red Sea. Jethro was thrilled to hear of all the kindness the Eternal had shown Israel, especially how He rescued them from the *powerful* hand of the Egyptians.

Jethro: Praise to the Eternal, for He rescued you from the powerful hand of the Egyptians, from the cruel grip of Pharaoh. He has liberated His people from beneath the *harsh* hand of their Egyptian *masters*. Now I know *with all my heart* that the Eternal is greater than all gods because of the way He delivered His people when Egyptians in their arrogance abused them. [Meaning of the Hebrew is unclear.]

The Voice

Bible Translations with an Excess of Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach

Jethro was happy about all the good that the Lord had done for Israel, that He had rescued them from the hands of the Egyptians.

Jethro was happy: Heb. דָּחִיּוּ; and Jethro rejoiced. This is its simple meaning. The Aggadic midrash, however, [explains that] his flesh became prickly [i.e., gooseflesh (וְיִדְוֶה וְיִדְוֶה)] [because] he was upset about the destruction of the Egyptians. This is [the source of] the popular saying: Do not disgrace a gentile in the presence of a convert, [even] up to the tenth generation [after the conversion]. — [from Sanh. 94a]

about all the good: The good of the manna, the well [of water that went with them], and the Torah, and above all, that He rescued them from the hands of the Egyptians. Until now, no slave had been able to escape from Egypt because the [border of the] land was locked, but these [people] fled six hundred thousand strong. — [from Mechilta]

[Thereupon,] Jethro said, "Blessed is the Lord, Who has rescued you from the hands of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, Who has rescued the people from beneath the hand of the Egyptians.

Who has rescued you from the hands of the Egyptians: A strong nation.

and from the hand of Pharaoh: A strong king.

from beneath the hand of the Egyptians: As the Targum [Onkelos] renders: [from beneath the control of the Egyptians,] an expression of tyrannization and domination. [The verse is referring to] the hand, which they [the Egyptians] laid heavily upon you [the Israelites]; the slavery

Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the deities, for with the thing that they plotted, [He came] upon them."

Now I know: I recognized Him in the past, but now [I recognize Him] even more. — [from Mechilta]

than all the deities: This teaches us that he [Jethro] was knowledgeable about every type of idolatry in the world, and there was no pagan deity that he did not worship. — [from Mechilta]

for with the thing that they plotted, [He came] upon them: Heb. וַיָּבֹא: [To be explained] according to its [Aramaic] translation. [Onkelos renders: For with the thing that the Egyptians plotted to judge Israel, with that He judged them.] With water, they planned to destroy them, and they [themselves] were destroyed with water.

that they plotted: That they planned wickedly. Our Rabbis, however, interpreted it [וַיָּבֹא] as an expression related to "Now Jacob cooked (וַיִּבְרֹא)" (Gen. 25:29) [and thus to infer that] in the very pot in which they cooked, they themselves were cooked. [from Sotah 11a]

Kaplan Translation

Jethro expressed joy because of all the good that God had done for Israel, rescuing them from Egypt's power. He said, 'Praised be God, who rescued you from the power of Egypt and Pharaoh - who liberated the people from Egypt's power. Now I know that God is the greatest of all deities. Through their very plots, He rose above them.'

Praised

Literally, 'blessed.'

Through their very plots...

(Targum; Rashi; Septuagint). Literally, 'Because in the thing that they plotted on them.' Alternatively, 'The very thing they plotted came on them' (Abarbanel); 'Through their very plots, He amused Himself with them' (Rashbam, cf. Exodus

NET Bible®

10:2); 'I am aware of how the [Egyptians] plotted against [the Israelites]' (Ramban; Chizzkuni). Or 'He saved the people from Egypt's power despite all their plots against them' (Ralbag).

Jethro rejoiced¹⁶ because of all the good that the Lord had done for Israel, whom he had delivered from the hand of Egypt. Jethro said, "Blessed¹⁷ be the Lord who has delivered you from the hand of Egypt, and from the hand of Pharaoh, who has delivered the people from the Egyptians' control!¹⁸ Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods, for in the thing in which they dealt proudly against them he has destroyed them."¹⁹

¹⁶tn The word קָדַח (khada) is rare, occurring only in Job 3:6 and Ps 21:6, although it is common in Aramaic. The LXX translated it "he shuddered." U. Cassuto suggests that that rendering was based on the midrashic interpretation in b. Sanhedrin 94b, "he felt cuts in his body" – a wordplay on the verb (Exodus, 215-16).

¹⁷tn This is a common form of praise. The verb בָּרַךְ (barukh) is the Qal passive participle of the verb. Here must be supplied a jussive, making this participle the predicate: "May Yahweh be blessed." The verb essentially means "to enrich"; in praise it would mean that he would be enriched by the praises of the people.

¹⁸tn Heb "from under the hand of the Egyptians."

¹⁹tn The end of this sentence seems not to have been finished, or it is very elliptical. In the present translation the phrase "he has destroyed them" is supplied. Others take the last prepositional phrase to be the completion and supply only a verb: "[he was] above them." U. Cassuto (Exodus, 216) takes the word "gods" to be the subject of the verb "act proudly," giving the sense of "precisely (כִּי, ki) in respect of these things of which the gods of Egypt boasted – He is greater than they (קְהִילָם, 'alehem)." He suggests rendering the clause, "excelling them in the very things to which they laid claim."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and "Yitro ^{His remainder} was amazed (over) all the functional things which "YHWH ^{He} ^{Is} did (for) "Yisra'el ^{He turns El aside}, (when) he delivered them from the hand of "Mits'rayim ^{Two straits}, and "Yitro ^{His remainder} said, [respected] is "YHWH ^{He Is} (who) delivered you from the hand of "Mits'rayim ^{Two straits}, and from the hand of "Paroh ^{Great house} (who) delivered the people from under the hand of "Mits'rayim ^{Two straits}, now I know that "YHWH ^{He Is} is great, (more than) all the "Elohiym ^{Powers}, (because) of the (matter) which they simmered upon them,...

Charles Thompson OT Whereupon Jothor was enrapt in wonder at all the good things which the Lord had done for them in delivering them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh; and Jothor said, Blessed be the Lord. Because he hath delivered these out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, I know now that the Lord is great above all the gods, for this reason because they were set against these.

Context Group Version And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which YHWH had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Esteemed be YHWH, who has delivered you (pl) out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh. Now I know that YHWH is greater than all gods; indeed, in the very thing through which they dealt proudly against them.

English Standard Version And Jethro rejoiced for all the good that the Lord had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

Jethro said, "Blessed be the Lord, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people." [Hebrew *with them*]

Modern English Version Jethro rejoiced because of all the goodness which the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. Jethro said, "The LORD be blessed, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who has delivered the people from under the hand of the

New American Standard B.	<p>Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, for in the matter in which they treated the <i>people</i> insolently, He was above them.”</p> <p>Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, ^[g]in delivering ^[h]them from the hand of the Egyptians. So Jethro said, “Blessed be the Lord who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, and who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods; ^[i]indeed, it was proven when they dealt proudly against ^[j]the people.”</p> <p>^[g] Exodus 18:9 Lit <i>in that He had delivered</i></p> <p>^[h] Exodus 18:9 Lit <i>him</i></p> <p>^[i] Exodus 18:11 Lit <i>indeed, in the thing in which they</i></p> <p>^[j] Exodus 18:11 Lit <i>them</i></p>
A Voice in the Wilderness	<p>And Jethro rejoiced for all the good which Jehovah had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be Jehovah, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all the gods; for in the very things in which they behaved proudly, He was above them.</p>
Young’s Updated LT	<p>And Jethro rejoices for all the good which Jehovah has done to Israel, whom He has delivered from the hand of the Egyptians; and Jethro says, “Blessed <i>is</i> Jehovah, Who has delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand of Pharaoh—Who has delivered this people from under the hand of the Egyptians; now I have known that Jehovah <i>is</i> greater than all the gods, for in the thing they have acted proudly— <i>He is</i> above them!”</p>

The gist of this passage: Jethro celebrates the good that God has done on behalf of Israel, and remarks how God has shown Himself to be greater than all gods.

9-11

With this passage, we get a better understanding of what Jethro knows and does not know.

Exodus 18:9a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
châdâh (חָדָה) [pronounced <i>khaw-DAW</i>]	<i>to be glad, to rejoice</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #2302 BDB #292
Yith ^e rôw (יִתְרוֹ) [pronounced <i>yihth-ROW</i>]	<i>his abundance; his excellence and is transliterated Jethro, Jether</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong’s #3503 BDB #452
‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gah]</i>	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong’s #5921 BDB #752
kôl (כָּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong’s #3605 BDB #481
Literally, this means <i>upon all of, over all of, against all of</i> .			

Exodus 18:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ṭōwbâh (טוֹבָה) [pronounced TOH ^B -vaw]	welfare, benefit, good, good things	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2896 BDB #375
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	that, which, when, who, whom; where	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH]	to do, to make, to construct, to produce, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as Jehovah, Yahweh, Y ^e howah	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Yis ^e râ'êl (יִסְרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	God prevails; contender; soldier of God; transliterated Israel	masculine proper noun; God-given name to Jacob; and national name for the Jewish people	Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975

Translation: Jethro rejoices over all the good that Y^ehowah has done for Israel,...

Jethro fully understands what is going on, and he celebrates all that God has done on behalf of Israel.

Jethro, I believe, is and always has been a priest of the **Revealed God**. I believe that his understanding of God was greater than Moses', at the time that they met. Therefore, I believe that Moses grew spiritually due to his relationship with Jethro (this is logical conjecture on my part). Jethro's full-throated support for Moses and for the God of Israel would seem to confirm that understanding of Jethro and his spiritual understanding of the Revealed God.

Now, quite obviously, we have no idea how God revealed Himself to Jethro; and we do not know all the Jethro knows. However, after observing Moses for a very short time, Jethro is going to revamp Moses' very own system; and Moses is going to embrace this change enthusiastically.

Exodus 18:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	that, so that, in that; for that, since; which; when, at what time; who, whom; where, wherever; the fact that = how; because that, because; as, like as; yea, even, yea even; until that; then, so [in an apodosis]; what	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb to be is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81

Exodus 18:9b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâtsal (נָצַל) [pronounced naw-TSAHL]	<i>to snatch away, to deliver, to rescue, to snatch out of danger, to preserve, to recover</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5337 BDB #664
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Yâd as a construct and the min preposition are literally rendered <i>from a hand of</i> ; together, they can also mean <i>out of the hand of</i> ; <i>out of the power of</i> ; <i>from the power of</i> .			
Mits ^e rayim (מִצְרַיִם) [pronounced mits-RAH-yim]	<i>double straights; transliterated Mizraim; also Egypt, Egyptians</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #4714 BDB #595

Translation: ...in that He rescued them from the hand of Egypt.

Israel was under the hand (control) of Egypt, and God removed them from Egypt and from Egypt's control.

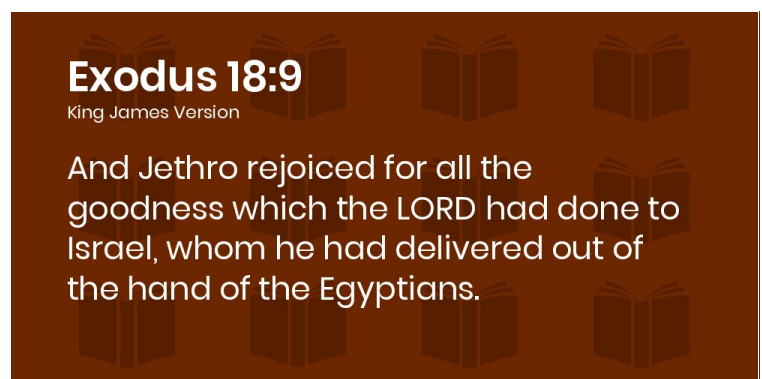
The verb *delivered* has with it the masculine, singular suffix, which is why it is translated *delivered him* rather than *delivered them*. What is being delivered by God is Israel (which word can refer to either an individual—Jacob—or to his descendants, as it does here).

This narrative recaps what has already been covered and it indicates that this meeting took place very soon after the Sea of Reeds buried the men of Pharaoh. There is not a lot new here except to see the relationship between Jethro and Moses.

Exodus 18:9 Jethro rejoices over all the good that Y^ehowah has done for Israel, in that He rescued them from the hand of Egypt. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Jethro shares Moses' enthusiasm for all that had taken place. It seems apparent that they both worship the Same God.

Exodus 18:9 (KJV) (a graphic); from the **King James Version Bible**; accessed July 19, 2023.



Exodus 18:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Yith ^e rôw (וִּיתְרוֹ) [pronounced yihth-ROW]	<i>his abundance; his excellence and is transliterated Jethro, Jether</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3503 BDB #452
bârak ^e (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced baw-RAHK ^e]	<i>blessed, blessed be [is], blessings to; happiness to [for], happiness [is]; praised is, celebrated is</i>	Qal passive participle	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
God blesses man; man praises and celebrates God.			
YHWH (הוּאִי) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: Jethro then said, "Praise is to Y^ehowah,...

Jethro now speaks, indicating to Moses all that he knows and understands, based upon what Moses has told him.

Blessed means exceedingly happy and it is a term of worship and respect and adoration. Jethro, when he says *Blessed be Y^ehowah*, he is expressing respect, joy and adoration toward Y^ehowah, his God.

Exodus 18:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
nâtsal (נָצַל) [pronounced naw-TSAHL]	<i>to snatch away, to deliver, to rescue, to snatch out of danger, to preserve, to recover</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #5337 BDB #664
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>you; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to you, toward you</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

Exodus 18:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Yâd as a construct and the min preposition are literally rendered <i>from a hand of</i> ; together, they can also mean <i>out of the hand of</i> ; <i>out of the power of</i> ; <i>from the power of</i> .			
Mits ^e rayim (מִצְרַיִם) [pronounced mits-RAH-yim]	<i>double straights</i> ; transliterated <i>Mizraim</i> ; also <i>Egypt</i> , <i>Egyptians</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #4714 BDB #595

Translation: ...for He rescued you [all] from the hand of Egypt...

You is a 2nd person plural suffix, so Jethro is saying, "...Who has delivered you (all) out of the hand of the Egyptians..." God is to be praised and feared and respected because He rescued all Israel from Egypt.

Exodus 18:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Yâd as a construct and the min preposition are literally rendered <i>from a hand of</i> ; together, they can also mean <i>out of the hand of</i> ; <i>out of the power of</i> ; <i>from the power of</i> .			
par ^e ôh (פַּרְעֹה) [pronounced pahr ^e -GOH]	<i>great house</i> ; possibly <i>hair head</i> (indicating one of great age and therefore with wisdom and authority); transliterated <i>pharaoh</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6547 BDB #829

Translation: ...and from the hand of Pharaoh,...

One might say that there are two entities involved: *Egypt*, as a nation; and *Pharaoh*, Egypt's leader.

God is praised because He rescued Israel from the control of Pharaoh.

What took place here is unprecedented in human history.

Exodus 18:10d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
nâtsal (נָצַל) [pronounced naw-TSAHL]	<i>to snatch away, to deliver, to rescue, to snatch out of danger, to preserve, to recover</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #5337 BDB #664
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced TAH-khahth]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
Min + tachath together mean <i>below, beneath, from under, from beneath</i> and it is used of those that were <i>under</i> anything and came out from there.			
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Mits ^e rayim (מִצְרַיִם) [pronounced mits-RAH-yim]	<i>double straights; transliterated Mizraim; also Egypt, Egyptians</i>	masculine singular, proper noun; pausal form	Strong's #4714 BDB #595

Translation: ...Who rescued the people from [being] under the boot [lit., *hand*] of Egypt.

We might better understand this that Israel was under the heavy boot of Egypt. Israel was enslaved to Egypt; and yet now, Jethro finds himself sitting in the midst of a free nation Israel, no longer under the control of Egypt.

Exodus 18:10 Jethro then said, "Praise is to Y^ehowah, for He rescued you [all] from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of Pharaoh, Who rescued the people from [being] under the boot [lit., *hand*] of Egypt. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, has come to Moses in the desert-wilderness north of Midian. Moses and Jethro are visiting with one another in Jethro's tent.

Exodus 18:10 (KJV) (a graphic) from [Pray.com](https://www.pray.com); accessed July 19, 2023.

The repeated use of the word *hand* emphasizes the power of the Egyptians. They were much stronger, vigorous, and more war-like than the Hebrews were. Under normal circumstances, the Egyptians could have quelled any kind of rebellion staged by the Hebrew people. However, these circumstances had not been normal. They were, for the most part, seemingly miraculous.



Hand of the Egyptians refers to power and control and might of the Egyptians. Its repetition emphasizes that it was a miracle for the Hebrews to be delivered from the Egyptians.

Jethro and Moses from the beginning seemed to be spiritually aligned, with the same trust and respect for the God of Israel. There was a good rapport between these men from the very beginning; and that love has grown deeper yet. Their personal love for one another is based upon the fact that they believe in the same God.

Exodus 18:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿattâh (עַתָּה) [pronounced <i>gaht-TAWH</i>]	<i>now, at this time, already</i>	adverb of time	Strong's #6258 BDB #773
When followed by an imperative or an interrogative, w ^e + the adverb ʿattâh mean <i>and so, thus, things being so, therefore, now therefore, now then, in conclusion</i> . Sometimes, the concept of time is lost when this combination is used to incite another.			
yâdaʿ (יָדָעַ) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHG</i>]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

Exodus 18:11a

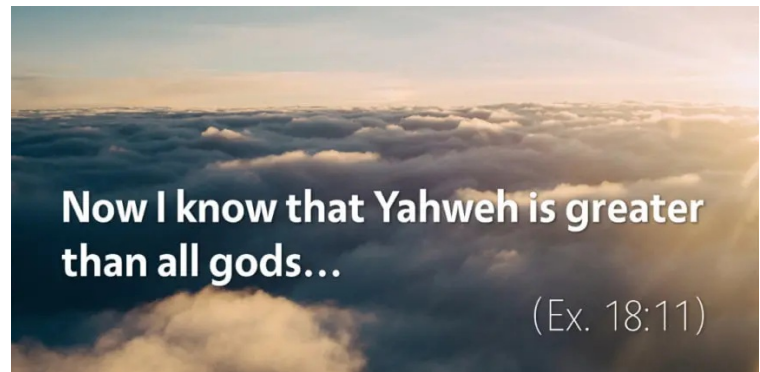
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
gādōwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced gaw-DOHL]	large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud; elder, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #1419 BDB #152
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah</i> , <i>Yahweh</i> , <i>Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than, greater than	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
kōl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
Literally, min kōl (כֹּל מִן) [pronounced mihn-kohl] means, <i>from all, from every</i> . However, together, various literal translations give the following renderings: <i>about all, of all</i> (1Sam. 23:23); <i>over all, more than all, above all</i> (Gen. 3:14).			
ʿēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	gods, foreign gods, god; God; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated <i>elohim</i> , <i>Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: And now I know that Y^ehowah is greater than all [other] gods,...

Exodus 18:11a (a graphic); from [Guard the Deposit](#); accessed July 19, 2023.

We do not know how well Jethro understood or invested faith in Y^ehowah Elohim, the True God. However, he is a family priest. It is my opinion that Jethro has believed in the Revealed God long before he met Moses. Jethro knew things about God which were true; but given what we read here, that Jethro did not fully appreciate the connection between the Revealed God and the people of Abraham.

Jethro is called a priest and I suspect that he functioned as a priest to the true God, despite being a gentile. I suspect that Jethro's knowledge of God was greater than we might think. That is, he understood the necessity of animal sacrifices; and he understood a great deal about God's character and essence. However, he appears to be missing that very important link, between God and Israel. What Moses tells him solidifies that understanding in Jethro.



Those who misunderstand the Old Testament believe that only Jews were saved and some actually believe that they were saved by observing **the Law**. Jews and gentiles like were saved through faith in the Revealed God (Genesis 15:6).

Paul, when writing to the Romans, a congregation which would have included both Jews and gentiles, confirmed with several Old Testament citations that God saved the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Romans 15:8–12 **Now I say Christ Jesus has become a servant of [the] circumcision on behalf of the truth of God, in order to confirm the promises to the fathers, and the Gentiles to glorify God on behalf of mercy, just as it has been written, "For this reason I Myself will confess [or, will give praise] to You among Gentiles, and I will sing praise to Your name." [2Sam 22:50] And again it [or, he] says, "Celebrate, [O] Gentiles, with His people!" [Deut 32:43] And again, "Be praising the LORD, all youp Gentiles; and highly praise Him, all youp peoples!" [Psalm 117:1] And again, Isaiah says, "[There] will be the root [or, shoot; fig., descendent] of Jesse, and the One rising up to rule Gentiles [or, nations], Gentiles will hope on [or, trust in] Him."** [Isaiah 11:10] (Analytical-Literal Translation) Four times Paul quotes the Old Testament to confirm that gentiles were saved in the **Age of Israel**. Paul could have cited the passage that we are studying as further proof of gentile faith in the time of Israel.

Exodus 18:11a **Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods;...** (NKJV)

Both Moses and Jethro would have been aware of their being other gods. Now, were these simply inferior gods? Jethro may have seen them in this way; and Moses himself may have. However, no matter what, greater than any other god, real or imagined, was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Was Jethro previously filled with doubts? Was he an idolater? Was Jethro fundamentally a heathen? No to all of these things. Jethro lacked one fundamental piece of doctrine, that the God of Israel is the True God. Exodus 18:11a is Jethro's testimony of faith in this doctrine. Many Christians struggle with the duality of the nature of Jesus, but when they study the **Hypostatic Union**, it all becomes clear.

The entire context of this meeting of these men suggests that they are enjoying fellowship with one another in the Presence of God. For these men to see one another again is due to the Providence of Israel's God.

My reasoning that Jethro is not simply a believer, but a mature believer, is as follows: there are 40 years where Moses is closely aligned with Jethro, his father-in-law; and we know little about this time. Logically, Moses had to advance spiritually during this time (as God uses spiritually prepared men). Therefore, Jethro must have been instrumental in that advance. I would also make room for the idea that Moses brought the book of Genesis with him out of Egypt. I do not think that he carried an armload of scrolls, but that he learned this book from his Hebrew teachers the way that all believers learned that book—he memorized it. Again, when God told Moses, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Moses did not stop God and say, "Am I supposed to know those guys?"

This spiritual fellowship between Moses and Jethro strongly suggests that Jethro operated on the same faith in the same God that we do. Now, at this point, he more fully appreciates God, having added to his faith a very important piece of information. He now better understood God in the light of all that happened (which things Moses has described). His faith perception has now been supplemented with clear empirical evidence of an even more personal and specific God.¹¹

Exodus 18:11a **Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods;...** (NKJV)

A less literal translation of this phrase might be, *I now know from empirical evidence the Y^ehowah is greater than all other gods.*

¹¹ I write this in the middle of 2019, and this is one of the themes of R. B. Thieme III's recent teaching.

There will be a time in our lives when we die and we go to be with God. Even those of us with strong faith, when we are face to face with God, things are going to be on a different level. So Jethro's faith has moved to a different level, temporally speaking.

Exodus 18:11a **Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods;...** (NKJV)

Why does God prefer faith perception over empiricism or rationalism? (1) Faith is the most fundamental form of knowledge; everyone exercises it and most of what people *know* is based upon faith (people *know* a great many things, true and false). (2) Seeing something with your own eyes is not always *proof enough* nor does it sustain. If viewing the acts of God could sustain, the **Exodus generation** should be the greatest generation of faith ever, but it is just the opposite. (3) Finally, faith represents a choice. People often deny that; but they are making a choice, no matter what it is that they believe.

Let me speak to having sustaining faith based upon what one sees: those of the Exodus generation have seen more of the great works of God than any previous generation. In fact, one might argue that the empirical evidence for Israel's God is given to more people in a more universal way in this generation than in any other (Jesus offered empirical proof to those who came out to see Him, but, this did not extend, for the most part, to those who were disinterested). We will see, throughout our study of the Pentateuch that, this empirical evidence does not carry this generation of Jewish believers. At this point, logically, we should be able to say, *the Exodus generation should know that their God can do anything*; but this will not be the attitude of the Exodus generation, for the most part. They have seen great empirical evidence, they have all placed their faith in the Y^ehowah to Whom Moses speaks, yet they are unable to have a consistent spiritual walk. Throughout the book of Exodus through Numbers, the Exodus generation will clearly lack consistency.

Many years ago, Monty Python did a bit on the **ministry of silly walks**. This would very much describe the spiritual walk of the Exodus generation.

We run into a problem with v. 11b. The problem is the NKJV, which is the translation which I have chosen as the base text.

Exodus 18:11b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAWR</i>]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command; business, occupation; case; something; manner</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
Two books tell me the definite article is there; I don't see it. Also, the Bêth lacks a dagesh and has a patah instead of a chiriq and I've spend an hour and can't find a similar example of this. I will accept there is a definite article here; I just don't recognize it.			
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

Exodus 18:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
zûd (זד) [pronounced ood]	<i>to boil [over, up], to seethe, to act proudly, to act presumptuously, to act rebelliously, to act arrogantly</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #2102 BDB #267
‘al (על) [pronounced gahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

Translation: ...for in the thing that [took place], they acted arrogantly against them.”

Although this final phrase is confusing, I will interpret it to mean that the people of Egypt acted with arrogance against the people of Israel. This is what Jethro understands from what he has heard.

V. 11 is the first verse in this chapter which has some problems in the translation and the meaning. The first phrase translates easily and its meaning is clear. The second phrase is not.

The second phrase begins with kîy (כי) [pronounced kee], which can mean *when, that, for, because*. It is followed by the bêth preposition (*in, into, with, among, at, by*) and the definite article. This is followed by dâbâr (דבר) [pronounced daw-BAWR] which means *word, matter, thing*. This can mean, ...for in [by] the word [thing]...

This is followed by ‘âsher (אשר) [pronounced ash-ER] and it is a relative pronoun meaning *which, as to which, who, that, when, where, for as much as, in order that*; it is a connective link without a simple translation. This is followed by the 3rd person plural, Qal perfect of zûwd (זוד) [pronounced zood], which means *to deal arrogantly with*. This is followed by the preposition *with, against, above* and the 3rd masculine plural suffix. This latter portion of the verse could be translated *inasmuch as they [the Egyptians] dealt arrogantly with them [the sons of Israel]*.

My translation of the second half of this verse is in accordance with the Modern Literal Version 2020, the ESV, Green's literal translation, and many others.

The problem is what is done with this final preposition. That preposition is ‘al (על) [pronounced gahl], and it means, *upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside*. Strong's #5921 BDB #752. With this preposition is the 3rd person plural suffix. A handful of translations add in the phrase *He was* (which is not there), to get another sentence, *[He was] above them*. This sentence is constructed from a single preposition with the 3rd person plural suffix. There is no reason to have a whole new sentence right here. This preposition and suffix fit fine into the sentence which proceeds them.

The Lexham English Bible gives both their interpretation (which I believe is sound) along with the literal rendering: *Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all the gods, even in the matter where they the Egyptians dealt arrogantly against the Israelites.* [Literally “because in the thing that they dealt arrogantly over them”]

Modern Literal Version (2020) *Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods, yes, in the thing in which they dealt proudly against them.*

English Standard Version *Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people.”* (the ESV adds the words *the people* in order for this sentence to make more sense to the casual reader).

A number of translations add this additional sentence simply because the KJV does this. However, many of those which do also reveal that this *He was* is simply added. One of the translations in the *All in One* reads: Exodus 18:11 (BSB) Now⁰¹ I know⁰² that⁰³ [is] greater⁰⁴ YHWH⁰⁵ than all⁰⁶ the gods⁰⁷; for⁰⁸ in the very thing⁰⁹ in which¹⁰ they behaved proudly¹¹ [He was] above them¹². (The numbers refer to the Hebrew word order). You can see that *He was* is simply added in where such an addition is unnecessary.

There are *translations* and there are *versions*. A translation goes back to the original Greek and Hebrew and builds a translated sentence from those words (that is what I do for the three translations found in this document). A version takes the King James Version and attempts to update it. This is why so many *versions* have an additional sentence in v. 11 (the NKJV or the BSB are two examples).

The *All in One (EN)* provides a *revised version* of the BSB: Now^{V01} I know^{V02} that^{V03} the LORD^{V04} is greater^{V05} than all other^{V06} gods,^{V07} for^{V08} He did this^{V09} when they^{V10} treated Israel with arrogance^{V11}."

For those of you who really do not want to deal with the Greek or Hebrew, but want some additional insight on specific verses, let me recommend the All in One (EN) to you, which is a **module** available for free for E-sword. You must set up a free membership with Bible Support in order to get their modules. This is a mashup of five separate modules.

The end result is, this is the correct reading:

Exodus 18:11 *And now I know that Y^ehowah is greater than all [other] gods, for in the thing that [took place], they [the Egyptians] acted arrogantly against them [the sons of Israel]."* (Kukis mostly literal translation, with some additional information inserted in the brackets)

This verse should not be rendered:

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."* (NKJV)

Because I chose the NKJV as my base text in the weekly e-mailed studies, I figured that I owed some explanation as to why I came up with a different translation.

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, recognizes that God is greater than all other gods, including the gods of Egypt. The people of Egypt acted with arrogance; yet God was far above them. Throughout the series of plagues, any Egyptian could have aligned himself with Israel and thus ended the plagues for himself and his family. However, there are only a few exceptions to the arrogance of the Egyptian people, those exceptions being called the *mixed multitude* who left Egypt with the Israelites.

Exodus 18:11 *And now I know that Y^ehowah is greater than all [other] gods, for in the thing that [took place], they acted arrogantly against them."* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 18:9–11 *Jethro rejoices over all the good that Y^ehowah has done for Israel, in that He rescued them from the hand of Egypt. Jethro then said, "Praise is to Y^ehowah, for He rescued you [all] from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of Pharaoh, Who rescued the people from [being] under the boot [lit., hand] of Egypt. And now I know that Y^ehowah is greater than all [other] gods, for in the thing that [took place], they acted arrogantly against them."* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 18:9–11 *Jethro, with Moses, rejoices over all the good that Jehovah was done for Israel, in that He rescued them from Egyptian control. He said, "Praise to Jehovah, for He rescued you from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of Pharaoh. He rescued your people from being under the boot of Egyptian tyranny. It is clear to me that Jehovah is greater than all other gods; and it is clear that Egypt acted with arrogance against the people of Israel."* (Kukis paraphrase)

And so takes Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, a burnt offering and sacrifices unto Elohim. And so comes in Aaron and all elders of Israel to eat bread with a father-in-law of Moses to faces of Elohim.

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Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, took a burnt offering and [some] sacrifices to Elohim [to offer up to Elohim]. Aaron also came in, with all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Jethro [lit., *father-in-law of Moses*] before Elohim.

Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, took a burnt offering and some sacrifices to God to offer up to God. Aaron also came in, along with the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Jethro and to share in the sacrificial ceremony before God.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so takes Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, a burnt offering and sacrifices unto Elohim. And so comes in Aaron and all elders of Israel to eat bread with a father-in-law of Moses to faces of Elohim.
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Jethro the father in law of Mosheh offered a burnt offering and sacrificed holy things before the Lord. And Aharon came, with all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with the father in law of Mosheh before the Lord.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jethro took burnt offerings and holy sacrifices before the Lord, and Aharon and all the elders of Israel. came to eat bread with the father in law of Mosheh before the Lord; and Mosheh stood and ministered before them.
Revised Douay-Rheims	So Jethro the kinsman of Moses offered holocausts and sacrifices to God: and Aaron and all the ancients of Israel came, to eat bread with them before God.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Yethro, Mosha's father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God. Aaron came with all of the elders of Yisrael, to eat bread with Mosha's father-in-law before God.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jethro, Moses father-in-law, offered burnt offerings and sacrifices to the LORD; and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses father-in-law before God.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And Jothor the father-in-law of Moses took whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices for God, for Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to eat bread with the father-in-law of Moses before God.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, made a burned offering to God: and Aaron came, with the chiefs of Israel, and had a meal with Moses' father-in-law, before God.
Easy English	Then Jethro, the father of Moses' wife, brought an animal, and other gifts, to God. And Aaron came, with all the leaders of the Israelites. They ate a meal together with Jethro, where God could see them.
Easy-to-Read Version–2001	Jethro got some sacrifices and offerings to honor God. Then Aaron and all the elders (leaders) of Israel came to eat with Moses' father-in-law Jethro. They all ate together there with God.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then Jethro brought an offering to be burned whole and other sacrifices to be offered to God; and Aaron and all the leaders of Israel went with him to eat the sacred meal as an act of worship.

The Message

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Names of God Bible	Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to Elohim . Aaron and all the leaders of Israel came to eat the meal with Moses' father-in-law in Elohim's presence.
NIRV	Then Moses' father-in-law Jethro brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God. Aaron came with all the elders of Israel. They ate a meal with Moses' father-in-law in the sight of God.

Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Jethro offered sacrifices to God. Then Aaron and Israel's leaders came to eat with Jethro there at the place of worship.
The Living Bible	Jethro offered sacrifices to God, [literally, "a burnt offering and sacrifices for God."] and afterwards Aaron and the leaders of Israel came to meet Jethro, and they all ate the sacrificial meal together before the Lor.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	Then Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, gave a burnt gift in worship to God. And Aaron came with all the leaders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.
New Living Translation	Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God. Aaron and all the elders of Israel came out and joined him in a sacrificial meal in God's presence.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	Then Jethro brought an animal to sacrifice by burning it on the altar as an offering, and he also offered other sacrifices to God. Aaron and the Israelite elders went with them to eat a meal with Jethro to honor God.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then His Excellence presented whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for God, and Aaron and all the elders of IsraEl came to eat bread before God, along with Moses' father-in-law.
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought an entirely burned offering and sacrifices to God. Aaron came with all of Israel's elders to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law in God's presence.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	So Moses' father-in-law Jethro brought offerings and sacrificed to God; and Aaron, with all the elders of Israel, came to sit at meat with him, there in God's presence.
Translation for Translators	Then Jethro sacrificed an animal by burning it completely on the altar <i>as an offering</i> , and he also offered other sacrifices to God. Aaron and the Israeli elders/leaders went with them/us to eat a sacred meal with Jethro.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia Translation	Now Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, took an ascent offering, and sacrifices for God. Then Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with the father-in-law of Moses in the presence of God.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Then Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, took burnt offerings and sacrifices to GOD, and Aaron and all the nobles of Israel came and dined with the father-in-law of Moses before GOD. It is evident from this record that the exile of Moses in Arabia had been a period of spiritual education under Jethro, and that the Arabs had preserved the Faith of Abraham in greater purity than the Egyptised Hebrews. —F.F.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.

Urim-Thummim Version	Then Jethro (Moses' father in law) procured a Burnt-Offering and sacrifices for Elohim and Aaron came, and all the Elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father in law before Elohim.
Wikipedia Bible Project	.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt offering, and sacrifices for God, and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat food with Moses' father in law before the face of God.
New American Bible (2002)	Then Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, brought a holocaust and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to participate with Moses' father-in-law in the meal before God.
New American Bible (2011)	Then Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, brought a burnt offering* and sacrifices for God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to share with Moses' father-in-law in the meal before God. * [18:12] That a non-Israelite, such as Jethro, should bless Israel's God by way of acknowledging what God had done for Israel (v. 10) is not entirely surprising; but the Midianite priest's sacrifice to the God of Israel, including his presiding over a sacrificial meal with Aaron and the elders of Israel, is unusual, suggesting that he was himself already a worshiper of Yhwh, Israel's God. Note further in this connection the role Jethro takes in the following narrative (vv. 13–27) in instituting a permanent judiciary for the Israelites. Burnt offering: a sacrifice wholly burnt up as an offering to God.
Revised English Bible—1989	Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a whole-offering and sacrifices for God; and Aaron and all the elders of Israel came and shared the meal with Jethro in the presence of God.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Yitro Moshe's father-in-law brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God, and Aharon came with all the leaders of Isra'el to share the meal before God with Moshe's father-in-law.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	Then Yithro, the father-in-law of Mosheh, brought a burnt offering and other slaughterings unto Elohim. And Aharon came with all the elders of Yisra'el to eat bread with the father-in-law of Mosheh before Elohim.
Tree of Life Version	Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, presented a burnt offering and sacrifices to God. Aaron also came along with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	AND JOTHOR THE FATHER-IN-LAW OF MOSES TOOK WHOLE BURNT-OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES FOR THE THEOS (<i>Alpha & Omega</i>), FOR AARON AND ALL THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL CAME TO EAT BREAD WITH THE FATHER-IN-LAW OF MOSES BEFORE THE THEOS (<i>Alpha & Omega</i>).
Awful Scroll Bible	Jethro, to whom Moses is being the son-in-law of, was to take a whole burnt offering and sacrifices to he of mighty ones. Aaron was to come in with the elders of Isra-el, to eat bread with Moses, he being his son-in-law.
Concordant Literal Version	Then Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, took an ascent offering along with sacrifices for Elohim, and Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to eat bread with the father-in-law of Moses, before the One, Elohim.
exeGesés companion Bible	And Yithro, in law of Mosheh, takes a holocaust and sacrifices for Elohim:

and Aharon comes with all the elders of Yisra El,
to eat bread with the in law of Mosheh
at the face of Elohim.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And Yitro, Moshe's khoten, brought an olah and zevakhim for Elohim; and Aharon came, and kol Ziknei Yisroel, to eat lechem with Moshe's khoten before HaElohim.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible

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 a meal with Moses' father-in-law before God.

The Expanded Bible

Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, gave a whole burnt offering [Lev. 1:1–17] and other sacrifices to God. Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to Moses' father-in-law to eat the holy meal [^L bread/food] together before God.

Kretzmann's Commentary

And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, the belief in whom he had so openly confessed, giving evidence of his faith by this act of sacrifice. And Aaron came and all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God. The children of Israel could enter into both religious and social fellowship with the man who had so openly confessed his belief in the true God. Eating bread before God was said of the sacrificial meal, the Lord being present as the invisible Guest. As Jethro here partook of the blessings of Israel, so heathen nations in after-years were called to the enjoyment of the Messianic hope and promises.

The Voice

Jethro then took a burnt offering and sacrifices and presented them to God. Aaron and the rest of the Israelite elders gathered to dedicate a meal to God with Moses' father-in-law.

Bible Translations with an Excess of Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach

Then Moses' father in law, Jethro, sacrificed burnt offering[s] and [peace] offerings to God, and Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to dine with Moses' father in law before God.

burnt offering[s]: Heb. הֵלַע. As its apparent meaning, because it [the offering] was completely (הֵלַע) burned [on the altar].

and [peace] offerings: Peace offerings.

And Aaron came: And where did Moses go? [Why is he not mentioned here as partaking of the feast?] He was standing and serving them. — [from Mechilta, Jonathan]

before God: From here [we learn] that if one derives pleasure from a feast at which Torah scholars are seated, it is as if he has derived pleasure from the splendor of the Shechinah. — [from Ber. 64a, Mechilta]

Kaplan Translation

Jethro brought burnt offerings and [other] sacrifices to God. Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to share the meal with Moses' father-in-law before God.

burnt offerings

See note on Genesis 8:20.

before God

Aware of God's presence (Rabag; Hirsch). Others say that 'before God' denotes that they were in front of the altar Moses had built (Exodus 17:15; Sforno; Abarbanel), the burning bush (Josephus 3:3), Mount Sinai (Rabag), or Moses' tent (Ibn Ezra, Sekhel Tov). Or, 'of what was offered before God' (Chizzkuni).

NET Bible®

Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought²⁰ a burnt offering and sacrifices for God,²¹ and Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to eat food²² with the father-in-law of Moses before God.

^{20tn} The verb is "and he took" (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB). It must have the sense of getting the animals for the sacrifice. The Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate have "offered." But Cody argues because of the precise wording in the text Jethro did not offer the sacrifices but received them (A. Cody, "Exodus 18,12: Jethro Accepts a Covenant with the Israelites," Bib 49 [1968]: 159-61).

^{21sn} Jethro brought offerings as if he were the one who had been delivered. The "burnt offering" is singular, to honor God first. The other sacrifices were intended for the invited guests to eat (a forerunner of the peace offering). See B. Jacob, Exodus, 498.

^{22tn} The word לֶחֶם (lekhem) here means the sacrifice and all the foods that were offered with it. The eating before God was part of covenantal ritual, for it signified that they were in communion with the Deity, and with one another.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and "Yitro ^{His remainder} , in-law of "Mosheh ^{Plucked out} , took a rising sacrifice and sacrifices (for) "Elohiym ^{Powers} , and "Aharon ^{Light bringer} came, and all the bearded ones of "Yisra'el ^{He turns El asides} , to eat bread with the in-law of "Mosheh ^{Plucked out} <in front of> the "Elohiym ^{Powers} ,...
Context Group Version	And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took an ascension [offering] and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.
English Standard Version	And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.
New King James Version	Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took [So with MT, LXX; Syr., Tg., Vg. <i>offered</i>] a burnt offering and <i>other</i> sacrifices <i>to offer</i> to God. And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.
Young's Updated LT	And Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, takes a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God; and Aaron comes in, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with the father-in-law of Moses, before God.

The gist of this passage: Jethro enjoys a meal of sacrificed animals with Aaron and the elders of Israel, enjoying fellowship before God.

Exodus 18:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
Yith ^e rôw (וִיִּתְרוֹ) [pronounced <i>yihth-ROW</i>]	<i>his abundance; his excellence and is transliterated Jethro, Jether</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3503 BDB #452

Exodus 18:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
chôthên (חָתָן) [pronounced khoh-THAIN]	<i>father-in-law, the wife's father</i>	Qal participle of verb; used as a substantive; masculine singular noun; construct form	Strong's #2859 BDB #368
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced moh-SHEH]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
ʿôlâh (עֹלָה) [pronounced ô-LAW]	<i>burnt offering, ascending offering</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong #5930 BDB #750
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
zebach (זֶבַח) [pronounced ZEH ^B -vakh]	<i>slaughtered animal [used in a sacrificial offering], slaughter, sacrifice, slaughterings, sacrificial animal</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #2077 BDB #257
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, took a burnt offering and [some] sacrifices to Elohim [to offer up to Elohim].

Jethro, to celebrate the situation and to celebrate what God has done, takes up a burnt offering and some sacrifices which he plans to offer up to God.

There is every indication that Jethro himself offers the burnt offering and these other sacrifices, since he is the subject of the verb. What is likely the case is, Jethro came with his daughter and grandsons and with a number of animals as well. He appears to recognize that a fellowship with the Hebrew God is based upon a blood sacrifice. I would further speculate that this has been his *modus operandi* for a considerable period of time, at least since he met Moses. It is my opinion that this approach to God (offering animal sacrifices) predated his first meeting Moses. Furthermore, at no time in the Bible is it ever suggested that Jethro is an idolater. At no time, is it ever suggested that he and Moses worship different gods. Based upon that, I believe that Jethro has been making sacrifices and conducting teachings as related to the Revealed God, Whom Jethro now understands to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (this is the update to Jethro's understanding of the Revealed God).

Everything which has come before indicates that Jethro was already a believer in the Revealed God (Who is Jesus Christ). Whereas this could be his initial confession of faith, it is my opinion that he is confirming his faith—that what happened with Pharaoh and Moses made it absolutely clear that Y^ehowah is the God of the Universe.

I believe that Jethro genuinely and accurately believed in the God Who had been revealed to him; but that he had not completely committed to faith in a personal God with a direct relationship already established with the Hebrew people.

Perhaps you object and say, "Well, that was not enough that Jethro simply believed in the Revealed God. He had to believe in the God of Israel for this to be complete. Now his faith is complete." You would be wrong to say that.

At the moment a person is saved, he is unaware of all the theology related to his salvation. When we believe in Jesus, sometimes we understand the barest of truths about Him (**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved** is all that I knew at salvation). It is after salvation that we learn more Christology and soteriology. As we learn more about the Jesus in Whom we have believed, our salvation becomes greater due to knowledge (that is, its impact on our lives becomes greater). However, even without that additional knowledge, we are still saved. When I believed in Jesus, my faith was based upon: **believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved**. I had been to many churches prior to this, had scattered knowledge about this and that, but, quite frankly, I did not even know what happened to Jesus after the crucifixion. Even though I had the normal exposure to Easter over the course of the previous 21 years, I really did not *know* anything beyond the Easter bunny and finding my basket of goodies. When I realized that Jesus had been raised from the dead, I was firming up the doctrine in my soul; but my salvation (my base point in the spiritual life) was the same. Now, I obviously believe that Jesus was raised from the dead and I understand much better what that means. However, that understanding of Jesus was not a part of my salvation experience. I had but a threadbare understanding of God's promise to me when I was saved. Since then, I have developed a much greater understanding of Whom I have believed.

My point in all of this is, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, knew a great deal about the Revealed God. He may be learning right now at this point that this is the God of the Jews; or many this fact is being confirmed to him. However, Jethro already knew enough to be a legitimate priest; and that he was able to teach Moses about this God when Moses came to Midian.

When God first spoke to Moses from the burning bush, Moses knew Genesis (or he knew parts of Genesis). Remember that God said to Moses, **"I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."** (Exodus 3:6; ESV) Now what sense does that make if you don't know who Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are? God might as well have said, "I am the God of Moe, Larry and Curley." But what God said had meaning to Moses. Therefore, Moses had some exposure to the book of Genesis, and this came either through his father-in-law in Midian, and/or through the teaching he received when in training to become pharaoh (I have no doubt that Moses received the best education available in Egypt, and that some of this education came from Hebrew teachers).

In any case, Moses and his father-in-law Jethro are completely on the exact same page at this point. They both have knowledge of and faith in the God of Israel.

Exodus 18:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'Ahărôn (אֲהֲרֹן) [pronounced ah-huh-ROHN]	transliterated Aaron	masculine proper noun	Strong's #175 BDB #14

Exodus 18:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôl (לֹל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of, all; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
z ^e qênîym (זִקְנִיִּם) [pronounced <i>zê-kay-NEEM</i>]	<i>old men; elders; chiefs, respected ones</i>	masculine plural adjective; used as a substantive; construct form	Strong's #2205 BDB #278
Yis ^e râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i>]	<i>God prevails; contender; soldier of God; transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun; God-given name to Jacob; and national name for the Jewish people	Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>lê</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âkal (אָכַל) [pronounced <i>aw-KAHL</i>]	<i>to eat; to dine; to devour, to consume, to destroy</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #398 BDB #37
lechem (לֶחֶם) [pronounced <i>LEH-khem</i>]	literally means <i>bread</i> ; used more generally for <i>food</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3899 BDB #536
'îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
chôthên (חֹתֵן) [pronounced <i>khoh-THAIN</i>]	<i>father-in-law, the wife's father</i>	Qal participle of verb; used as a substantive; masculine singular noun; construct form	Strong's #2859 BDB #368
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>lê</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Together, they mean *upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of, which faces*. When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning *in the judgment of*. This can also mean *forwards; the front part* [or, the edge of a sword]. L^epânîym (לִפְנֵי) can take on a temporal sense as well: *before, of old, formerly, in the past, in past times*. Literally, this means *to faces of*.

Exodus 18:12b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Interesting to find the sign of the direct object here; usually we do not find it with this construction.			
ʾĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: Aaron also came in, with all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Jethro [lit., *father-in-law of Moses*] before Elohim.

Aaron and the elders of Israel come into the tent, where Jethro is, in order to become a part of his celebration, to also eat bread with Jethro before God. Sacrifices were not burned up; they were eaten. The eating of the sacrifice was a sign of faith.

This is Old Testament fellowship between believers. Sacrifices are offered to God and the meal of the sacrifice is shared. This is fellowship before God; fellowship based upon a relationship with God.

Exodus 18:12b **And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.** (NKJV)

The final few words, that this takes place in the Presence of God, indicates that Jethro worships the same God as Moses and the people of Israel.

At least two translations pose the question, *where's Moses?* One of them suggests, *well, he's serving the meal!* I don't know that we should view this as an important consideration. Moses is very likely right there (as Jethro referenced him in v. 10).

Exodus 18:12 **Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, took a burnt offering and [some] sacrifices to Elohim [to offer up to Elohim]. Aaron also came in, with all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Jethro [lit., *father-in-law of Moses*] before Elohim.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

What is important in this verse is, Jethro, a Midianite (gentile) priest, is enjoying fellowship with the Hebrew people and before the God of the Hebrew people.

Ferrar Fenton: *It is evident from this record that the exile of Moses in Arabia had been a period of spiritual education under Jethro, and that the Arabs had preserved the Faith of Abraham in greater purity than the Egyptised Hebrews.*¹²

It is clear that many in the Exodus generation did not have a full and complete faith in their God. They were saved, but ignorant of many things.

¹² From [the Ten Commandments Ministry](#); accessed May 23, 2019.

Jethro's relationship to Moses is extremely important, as was Melchizedek's to Abraham.

Comparing Jethro to Melchizedek (Gerber and Sailhamer)

From Jacob D. Gerber:

1. Jethro was a foreign (gentile) priest of Midian. Exodus 18:1
2. Jethro came to Moses immediately after a great military victory. God had destroyed the Egyptians in the Red Sea. Exodus 14
3. Jethro came to Moses immediately before God made a covenant with God's people. Exodus 19–24
4. Jethro blessed God for delivering (natsal) Israel from their enemies: "**Blessed be Yahweh, Who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.**" Exodus 18:10
5. Jethro brought bread to this meal of fellowship (which fellowship included both Hebrews and gentiles). Exodus 18:12

John Sailhamer:

1. Melchizedek was a foreign (gentile) priest of Salem. Genesis 14:18
2. Melchizedek came to Abram immediately after a great military victory. Abram and his 318 trained men rescued Lot from Chedorlaomer and his allies. Genesis 14:14–16
3. Melchizedek came to Abram immediately before God made a covenant with Abram (this would be a covenant of peace between Abram and a gentile; made before God). Genesis 15
4. Melchizedek blessed God for delivering (magan) Abram from his enemies: "**...and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand!**" Genesis 14:20
5. Melchizedek brought out bread and wine, which he will share with Abram. This is a spiritual fellowship being enjoyed by a gentile and a Hebrew. Genesis 14:18

Sailhamer: *The purpose of these parallels appears to be to cast Jethro as another Melchizedek, the paradigm of the righteous Gentile.*

From <https://guardthedeposit.com/2015/01/gospel-teaches-us-jethro-exodus-18/> accessed July 19, 2023. Edited.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Exodus 18:12 Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, took a burnt offering and some sacrifices to God to offer up to God. Aaron also came in, along with the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Jethro and to share in the sacrificial ceremony before God. (Kukis paraphrase)

Before we leave v. 12, let me ask the question: did Moses tend to his wife and sons? I am sure that he did. But we know from the circumcision incident that Moses' wife, Zipporah, was not fully onboard with the faith of Moses. I believe that she is saved—in that she has believed in the Revealed God—but that she has never developed her faith further and that she has never fully appreciated all that she had with Moses and her own father. That is, Moses' wife could have learned a great deal from her father and from her husband, but she resisted the doctrine. This is quite sad, being that she is married to the greatest man of God in that era.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Jethro observes Moses daily grind

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, knowing that Moses was near to Midian, brings his wife and two sons to him. Apparently Jethro is going to shadow Moses when Moses goes back to work.

And so he is from [the] morrow and so sits Moses to judge the people. And so stand the people by Moses from the morning as far as the sunset. And so sees father-in-law of Moses all which he was doing for the people, and so he says, "Why the word the this, that [which] you are doing for the people? Why [are] you sitting to separation and all the people are standing by you from the morning as far as the night?"

Exodus
18:13–14

And it was on the next day that Moses sat to judge the people. And the people stood by Moses from morning to sunset. Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, so he asked, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why [are] you sitting alone with all the people standing by you from morning til sunset?"

On the next day, Moses sat to judge the people. The people stood by Moses from morning to night. Moses' father-in-law observed all that Moses did for the people, and he asked Moses, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why are you handling this on your own, while the people are standing before you from morning to night?"

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he is from [the] morrow and so sits Moses to judge the people. And so stand the people by Moses from the morning as far as the sunset. And so sees father-in-law of Moses all which he was doing for the people, and so he says, "Why the word the this, that [which] you are doing for the people? Why [are] you sitting to separation and all the people are standing by you from the morning as far as the night?"
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And on the day after, Mosheh sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Mosheh from morn till evening; and the father in law of Mosheh observed all that he did to the people. And he said, What thing is this that thou art doing to the people? Why dost thou sit alone, with all the people standing about thee from morn till evening?
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the day after, the day of reconciliation, Mosheh sat to judge the people: and the people stood before Mosheh from morning till evening. And the father in law of Mosheh saw how much he toiled and laboured for his people; and he said, What thing is this that thou art doing to the people? Why dost thou sit alone to judge, and all the people stand before thee from morning until evening?
Revised Douay-Rheims	And the next day Moses sat, to judge the people, who stood by Moses from morning until night. And when his kinsman had seen all things that he did among the people, he said: What is it that you do among the people? Why sit you alone, and all the people wait from morning till night.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	It happened on the next day, that Mosha sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Mosha from the morning to the evening. When Mosha's father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, "What is this thing that you do for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning to evening?"
Peshitta (Syriac)	And it came to pass the next day that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood by Moses from morning to evening. And when Moses father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said to him, What is this thing that you are

doing for the people? Why do you sit in judgment all alone, and all the people stand by you from morning to evening?

Updated Brenton (Greek)

And it came to pass after the morrow that Moses sat to judge the people, and all the people stood by Moses from morning till evening. And Jothor having seen all that Moses did to the people, says, What is this that thou doest to the people? wherefore sittest thou alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning till evening?

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English

Now on the day after, Moses took his seat to give decisions for the people: and the people were waiting before Moses from morning till evening. And when Moses' father-in-law saw all he was doing, he said, What is this you are doing for the people? why are you seated here by yourself, with all the people waiting before you from morning till evening?

Easy English

The next day, Moses sat down to judge the people. They stood round him from morning until evening. 14 Jethro saw all that Moses did for the people. Then he said: 'What is this that you do for the people? Why do you sit alone and judge the people? These people stand round you during the whole day.'

Easy-to-Read Version–2001

The next day, Moses had the special job of judging the people. {There were very many people,} so the people had to stand before Moses all day. 14 Jethro saw Moses judging the people. He asked, "Why are you doing this? Why are you the only judge? And why do people come to you all day?"

Easy-to-Read Version–2006

The next day, Moses had the special job of judging the people. There were so many people that they had to stand before him all day.

God's Word™

Jethro saw Moses judging the people. He asked, "Why are you doing this? Why are you the only judge? And why do people come to you all day?"

The next day Moses was settling disagreements among the people. The people stood around Moses from morning until evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw everything Moses was doing for the people, he asked, "Why are you doing this for the people? Why do you sit here alone, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?"

Good News Bible (TEV)

The Appointment of Judges

The next day Moses was settling disputes among the people, and he was kept busy from morning till night. When Jethro saw everything that Moses had to do, he asked, "What is all this that you are doing for the people? Why are you doing this all alone, with people standing here from morning till night to consult you?"

The Message

The next day Moses took his place to judge the people. People were standing before him all day long, from morning to night. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What's going on here? Why are you doing all this, and all by yourself, letting everybody line up before you from morning to night?"

NIRV

The next day Moses took his seat to serve the people as their judge. They stood around him from morning until evening. His father-in-law saw everything Moses was doing for the people. So he said, "Aren't you trying to do too much for the people? You are the only judge. And all these people are standing around you from morning until evening."

New Simplified Bible

The next day Moses settled disputes among the people. He was busy from morning till night. Jethro saw everything that Moses had to do. He asked: »What is all this that you are doing for the people? Why are you doing this all alone? There are people standing here from morning till night to consult you?«

Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	The next morning Moses sat down at the place where he decided legal cases for the people, and everyone crowded around him until evening. Jethro saw how much Moses had to do for the people, and he asked, "Why are you the only judge? Why do you let these people crowd around you from morning till evening?"
The Living Bible	The next day Moses sat as usual to hear the people's complaints against each other, from morning to evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw how much time this was taking, he said, "Why are you trying to do all this alone, with people standing here all day long to get your help?"
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	Men Who Judge The next day Moses sat to judge the people. And the people stood around Moses from morning until evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you do for the people? Why do you sit alone and judge and all the people stand around you from morning until evening?"
New Living Translation	Jethro's Wise Advice The next day, Moses took his seat to hear the people's disputes against each other. They waited before him from morning till evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, "What are you really accomplishing here? Why are you trying to do all this alone while everyone stands around you from morning till evening?"
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	The next day, Moses sat down at the place where he settled disputes among the people. The people were bringing their disputes to Moses from the morning until the evening. When Jethro saw everything that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "Why are you doing all this for the people? Why are you doing this by yourself, and why are all the people standing around you from the morning until the evening, asking you to make decisions for them?"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well, the next morning, Moses sat down to [serve as] judge for the people, and they [kept coming to] him all day long. Then when His Excellence noticed all that [Moses was doing], he asked: 'Why are you sitting there all by yourself as the people come to you from morning until night?'
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	.
International Standard V	Jethro Advises Moses to Appoint Judges The next day Moses sat down to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning until evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, [The Heb. lacks <i>as judge</i>] with all the people standing around you from morning until evening?"
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Next day, Moses was in his place deciding disputes among the people, who must stand there from morning till evening waiting for an audience with him; and when Jethro saw how he busied himself over the people's needs, he asked, What makest thou here among the people? Why dost thou sit there alone, with all the people waiting upon thee from morning till evening?
Translation for Translators	Jethro gave Moses some good advice about appointing judges The next day, Moses/I sat down at the place where he/I settled disputes among the people. The people were continually bringing their disputes to Moses/me, from morning until evening. When Jethro saw everything that Moses/I was doing for the people, he said, " Why are you doing all this for the people?/You should not be doing all this for the people! [RHQ] Why are you doing this by yourself, and all the

people are crowding around you, from morning until evening, *asking you to make decisions for them* [RHQ]?"

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia Translation	The next day, Moses happened to be sitting in judgment before the people. The people were standing and waiting on Moses from morning to evening. Moses' father-in-law could see all that Moses did for the people. Then he said, "Why do you do all this for the people? Why should you sit alone in judgment, and have all the people wait on your judgments from morning to evening?"
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Moses Administering Justice. The next day, however, Moses sat to administer justice to the People, and Moses remained from morning to evening. And the father-in-law of Moses saw all that he did for the What is this business that you do for the People? Why do you sit alone, and all the People standing before you from morn till night.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And it chanced on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from morning unto evening. When his father in law saw all that he did unto the people, he said: what is this that you do unto the people? why sits you yourself and let all the people stand about you from morning unto even?
Jubilee Bible 2000	And it came to pass another day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood before Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this that thou doest to the people? Why sittest thou thyself alone and all the people stand before thee from morning unto evening?
Urim-Thummim Version	Then the next day when Moses sat to govern the people, the people stood by Moses from sunrise to sunset. When Moses' father in law saw all that he did for the people he asked, what is this thing that you do for the people? Why sit you yourself alone here and all the people stand by you from sunrise to sunset?
Wikipedia Bible Project	And it was at the next day, and Moses returned to judge the people. And the people stood next to Moses from the morning until the evening. And Moses's father in law saw all that he is doing for the people, and said "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why are you sitting alone, and all the people are posted against you from the morning until the evening?"

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And it was on the next day, and Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood by Moses from the dawn to the dusk. And Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, and he said, What is this word that you do to the people? Why do you sit yourself alone, and all the people stationed by you from dawn to dusk?
New American Bible (2002)	The next day Moses sat in judgment for the people, who waited about him from morning until evening. When his father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he inquired, "What sort of thing is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone while all the people have to stand about you from morning till evening?"
New American Bible (2011)	<i>Appointment of Minor Judges.</i> The next day Moses sat in judgment for the people, while they stood around him from morning until evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he asked, "What is this business that you are conducting for the people? Why do you sit alone while all the people have to stand about you from morning till evening?"
New English Bible—1970	Appointment of Judges. - Dt.1.9-18 The next day Moses took his seat to settle disputes among the people, and they were standing round him from morning till evening. When Jethro saw all that he was

New Jerusalem Bible	doing for the people, he said, 'What are you doing for all these people? Why do you sit alone with all of them standing round you from morning till evening?'
Revised English Bible–1989	On the following day, Moses took his seat to administer justice for the people, and the people were standing round him from morning till evening. Seeing all he did for the people, Moses' father-in-law said to him, 'Why do you do this for the people, why sit here alone with the people standing round you from morning till evening?'
	The next day Moses took his seat to settle disputes among the people, and he was surrounded from morning till evening. At the sight of all that he was doing for the people, Jethro asked, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone with all of them standing round you from morning till evening?"

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	<i>(ii)</i> The following day Moshe sat to settle disputes for the people, while the people stood around Moshe from morning till evening. When Moshe's father-in-law saw all that he was doing to the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing to the people? Why do you sit there alone, with all the people standing around you from morning till evening?"
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And it came to be, on the next day, that Mosheh sat to rightly rule the people. And the people stood before Mosheh from morning until evening. And when the father-in-law of Mosheh saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit by yourself, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?"

Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible Awful Scroll Bible	. On the next day, Moses was to sit to make judgment for the people. The people were to stand by Moses from morning till evening. Moses, of whom he is being the son-in-law of, was to perceive what he is to effect to the people. He even was to say: Is you to effect this concern to the people, you sitting and the people standing, even from morning till evening? -
Charles Thompson OT	And on the morrow Moses sat to administer justice to the people, and all the people attended on Moses from early in the morning till late in the evening. And when Jothor saw all that he did for the people, he said, What is this that thou dost for the people? Why hast thou sitten alone and all the people attended thee from morning till night?
Concordant Literal Version	It came to be on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people. So the people stood by Moses from the morning until evening. When the father-in-law of Moses saw all that he was doing for the people, he said: What is this matter that you are doing for the people? For what reason are you sitting by yourself alone with all the people stationing themselves by you from morning until evening?
exeGesés companion Bible	And so be it, on the morrow, Mosheh sits to judge the people: and the people stand by Mosheh from the morning to the evening. Exo 18:14 And when the in law of Mosheh sees all he works to the people, he says, What word is this that you work to the people? Why sit you yourself alone? And all the people station themselves by you from morning to evening?
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And it came to pass on next day, that Moshe sat to judge HaAm; and HaAm stood around Moshe from the boker unto erev.

And when Moshe's khoten saw all that he was doing for HaAm, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? Why sittest thou thyself alone, and kol HaAm stand around thee from boker unto erev?

Third Millennium Bible

And it came to pass on the morrow that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What is this thing that thou doest for the people? Why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto evening?"

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible

Now the next day Moses sat to judge [the disputes] the people [had with one another], and the people stood around Moses from dawn to dusk. When Moses' father-in-law saw everything that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why are you sitting alone [as a judge] with all the people standing around you from dawn to dusk?"

The Expanded Bible

The next day Moses ·solved disagreements [decided cases; ¹sat as judge] among the people, and the people stood around him from morning until night. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, "What is all this you are doing for the people? Why are you the only one ·to solve disagreements [¹ sitting]? All the people are standing ·around you [or in line] from morning until night!"

Kretzmann's Commentary

Verses 13-27

Jethro's Advice to Moses

And it came to pass on the morrow that Moses sat to judge the people, to hear cases, to adjust differences and give advice. And the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. The number of the people being so great, there were many matters to adjust and many difficulties to untangle, and it took a great deal of Moses' time and energy. And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? Why sit test thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? In brief: What is the idea, what is the object of your doing all this work alone; why try to bear the great burden without assistance?

The Voice

On the next day, Moses sat *and served as judge*, settling disputes among the people. Those *with grievances* surrounded him from sunrise to sundown *waiting to present their case*. Jethro noticed all Moses was doing for the people.

Jethro: What do you think you are doing? Why are you the only one who is able to judge the disputes of all these people who surround you from sunrise to sundown?

Bible Translations with an Excess of Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach

It came about on the next day that Moses sat down to judge the people, and the people stood before Moses from the morning until the evening.

It came about on the next day: This was the day after Yom Kippur. This is what we learned in Sifrei [actually in the Mechilta]. Now what is meant by "on the next day"? On the day after his [Moses'] descent from the mountain [which took place on Yom Kippur]. You must admit that it is impossible to say [that the next day means] anything but that [Moses sat down to judge the people] on the day after Yom Kippur. Before the giving of the Torah it was impossible to say (verse 15), "and I make known the statutes, etc.," [since the statutes had not yet been given]. And from the time that the Torah was given, until Yom Kippur, Moses did not [have the chance to] sit down to judge the people, for on the seventeenth of Tammuz he descended [Mount Sinai] and broke the tablets. On the next day he ascended early in the morning and stayed for eighty days and descended on Yom Kippur. Hence, this section is not written in [chronological] order, for "It came about on the next day," was not said until the second year. Even according to the one [Tanna] who says that Jethro arrived before the giving of the Torah, he was not sent away to his land until the second year, for it says here (verse 27), "Moses saw his father-in-law off," and we find in the journey of the divisions [of the tribes, which took place in the second year,] that Moses said to him [Jethro], "We are journeying to the place... Please, do not leave us" (Num. 10:29-31). Now if this [incident] had taken place before the giving of the Torah, where do we find [i.e., where is it mentioned] that he returned? If you say that there [Num. 10:29] Jethro is not mentioned, but Hobab [is mentioned], and he was Jethro's son, [that is not so since] Hobab is identical with Jethro, for so it is written: "of the children of Hobab, Moses' father-in-law" (Jud. 4:11). -[based on Mechilta]

that Moses sat down..., and the people stood: He sat like a king, and they [everyone who came to be judged] all stood. The matter displeased Jethro, that he [Moses] belittled the respect due [the people of] Israel, and he reproved him about it, as it is said: "Why do you sit by yourself, and they are all standing?" [from Mechilta]

from the morning until the evening: Is it possible to say this [that Moses actually sat in judgment from morning until evening]? But this [teaches us that] any judge who issues a true verdict-as truth demands it-even [if he spends only] one hour [reaching his judgment], Scripture deems it as if he had engaged in [the study of] the Torah for the entire day, and as if he were a partner with the Holy One, blessed is He, in the [act of] Creation, in which it says: "and it was evening, [and it was morning...]" (Gen. 1:5). [from Mechilta, Shab. 10a]

When Moses' father in law saw what he was doing to the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing to the people? Why do you sit by yourself, while all the people stand before you from morning till evening?"

The next day, Moses sat to judge the people. They stood around Moses from morning to evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that [Moses] was doing for the people, he said, 'What are you doing to the people? Why are you sitting by yourself and letting all the people stand around you from morning until evening?'

The next day

Simply, the day after Jethro had come (Ibn Ezra; Ramban; Josephus 3:4:1). There is however, a tradition, that this was on the day after Yom Kippur, right after Moses came down with the second set of Tablets (Mekhilta; Targum Yonathan; Rashi; see Exodus 34:29, Deuteronomy 10:5).

On the next day²³ Moses sat to judge²⁴ the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning until evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this²⁵ that you are doing for the people?²⁶ Why are you sitting by yourself, and all the people stand around you from morning until evening?"

^{23tn} Heb "and it was/happened on the morrow."

^{24sn} This is a simple summary of the function of Moses on this particular day. He did not necessarily do this every day, but it was time now to do it. The people would come to solve

their difficulties or to hear instruction from Moses on decisions to be made. The tradition of “sitting in Moses’ seat” is drawn from this passage.

^{25tn} Heb “what is this thing.”

^{26sn} This question, “what are you doing for the people,” is qualified by the next question. Sitting alone all day and the people standing around all day showed that Moses was exhibiting too much care for the people – he could not do this.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans.	...and (it) (came to pass) (on) the morrow, and " Mosheh ^{Plucked out^{tr}} settled to decide the people, and the people stood upon " Mosheh ^{Plucked out^{tr}} from the morning until the evening, and the in-law of " Mosheh ^{Plucked out^{tr}} saw all which he was doing (for) the people, and he said, what is this (matter) which you are doing (for) the people? why are you settling (by) your<self>, and all the people are standing upon you from morning until evening?...
Modern English Version	On the next day, Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from the morning until the evening. When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, “What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why are you sitting by yourself while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?”
New American Standard B.	It came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening. Now when Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, “What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit <i>as judge</i> and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?”
New European Version	An Administrative System Put in Place It happened on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from the morning to the evening. When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that you do for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning to evening?
Young’s Updated LT	And it comes to pass on the morrow, that Moses sitted to judge the people, and the people stand before Moses, from the morning unto the evening; and the father-in-law of Moses sees all that he is doing to the people, and says, “What is this thing which you are doing to the people? wherefore are you sitting by yourself, and all the people standing by you from morning till evening?”

The gist of this passage: Jethro comes to find that Moses acts as the judge and arbiter for all of the people of Israel, and he deals with their disputes and problems from morning till night.

13-14

Exodus 18:13a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #1961 BDB #224

Exodus 18:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means <i>and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass</i> (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered <i>subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which</i> . Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).			
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
mâchōrâth (מָחָרָת) [pronounced <i>maw-chuh-RAWTH</i>]	<i>the morrow</i> (the day following a past day), <i>tomorrow, the next day, the following day</i>	feminine singular noun/adverb	Strong's #4283 BDB #564
With the min preposition, mâchōrâth means <i>on the morrow, on the next day</i> .			
The Complete Tanach wrote a rather long paragraph about <i>the next day</i> ; but what appears to be the case is, it is simply the next day, after Jethro enjoyed that previously described meal of fellowship.			
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAH^{AV}</i>]	<i>to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit, to reside; to sit</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
shâphaṭ (שָׁפַט) [pronounced <i>shaw-FAHT</i>]	<i>to judge, to condemn, to punish; to defend [especially the poor and oppressed], to defend [one's cause] and deliver him from his enemies; to rule, to govern</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #8199 BDB #1047
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'am (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

Translation: And it was on the next day that Moses sat to judge the people.

Even though Jethro has shown up with Moses' wife, it is very clear that Moses and Jethro get on famously. The wife and children are not mentioned again in the Pentateuch.

In any case, perhaps Moses invited Jethro to watch him judge the people, which means that he will mediate various disputes between them. Or perhaps Moses was doing this and Jethro searched him out to see what was going on. In any case, this was Moses' job, if you will; and Jethro was there to observe.

Exodus 18:13b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿamad (עָמַד) [pronounced <i>gaw-MAHD</i>]	<i>to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure, to withstand; to stop, to cease</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5975 BDB #763
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
bôqer (בֹּקֶר) [pronounced <i>BOH-ker</i>]	<i>morning, daybreak, dawn; the next morning</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #1242 BDB #133
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
Together, min...ʿad (מִן ... עַד) mean <i>from...to</i> or <i>both...and</i> ; as in <i>from soup to nuts</i> or <i>both young and old</i> .			
ʿereb (עֶרֶב) [pronounced <i>GEH-reb</i>]	<i>evening, sunset</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6153 BDB #787

Translation: And the people stood by Moses from morning to sunset.

Moses is judging the people and the people come and stand before him, and this goes on, from morning to night (they quit at sunset).

Recall that we are dealing with a very apostate, faithless generation of Hebrews (despite the fact that they are all believers). From this general character comes a great many disputes, disagreements, lawsuits, and altercations—particularly when 2,000,000 of them are traveling to where they know not and encountering trials for which they have no spiritual assets. Tempers will flair, men will be petty, and they have but one person over

them who even has a clue as to what it is all about: Moses. Therefore, they bring every little problem to Moses for him to solve.

How many times have two Israelites nearly come to blows, and one of them says, “Let’s take this to Moses. He’ll tell you I’m right.” And the other man agrees because he knows that he is in the right.

Exodus 18:13 **And it was on the next day that Moses sat to judge the people. And the people stood by Moses from morning to sunset.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Moses took upon himself the great task of mediating all of the disagreements among the people. He would spend most of his day listening to these disagreements and then giving his final judgment on each dispute.

Wouldn’t it be great if there was some sort of written guidance provided?

Jethro with Moses as Moses Judges the People (a graphic); from **Messiah, Prophecy and History**; accessed July 19, 2023.

Having observed his son-in-law for a day, Jethro has something to say about what Moses is doing. However, he does not interrupt what Moses is doing in order to say these things.



Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Exodus 18:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i>]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
chôthên (חֹתֵן) [pronounced <i>khoh-THAIN</i>]	<i>father-in-law, the wife's father</i>	Qal participle of verb; used as a substantive; masculine singular noun; construct form	Strong's #2859 BDB #368
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602

Exodus 18:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
’êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
’ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, kôl ’ăsher mean <i>all which, all whom, all that [which]; whomever, whatever, whatever else, all whose, all where, wherever</i> .			
hûw’ (הוּא) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>he, it; him, himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one); same</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
’âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>doing, making, manufacturing, constructing, fashioning, forming, preparing; producing</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
’am (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

Translation: Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people,...

Jethro observes all that Moses is doing on behalf of the people. He watches every case that day as mediated by Moses.

Jethro is a very intelligent man, and in a day, he was able to evaluate what Moses was doing; and he figured out how this could be better handled.

Jethro asks Moses a couple of pointed questions.

Exodus 18:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Exodus 18:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
mâh (מַה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
dâbâr (דְּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260
Literally, this is <i>what the word the this?</i> This means, <i>what is going on? What is this thing? What is happening here!</i> This is how it has been translated: .			
'asher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>doing, making, manufacturing, constructing, fashioning, forming, preparing; producing</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'am (עַם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

Translation: ...so he asked, "What is this that you are doing for the people?"

After observing for a day or more, Jethro volunteers his take on this situation. He asks a few questions to begin with: "What is it that you do for the people?" Jethro is going to explain that there are more efficient ways of having a court system and serving the people.

Jethro has no experience whatsoever in this field, but he did raise a brood of daughters.

Exodus 18:14c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
maddu'a (מַדּוּעַ) [pronounced mah-DOO-ahg]	<i>why, wherefore, on what account; how come, and it is probably a contraction of a word which means what being known</i>	adverb	Strong's #4069 BDB #396
'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	<i>you (often, the verb to be is implied)</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
yâshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH ^h V]	<i>is inhabiting, is staying, remaining, dwelling, residing; sitting</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^h]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bad (בַּד) [pronounced bahd]	<i>separation, by itself, alone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #905 BDB #94
Together, the lâmed preposition and bad (בַּד) mean <i>in a state of separation, by itself, alone, only; apart</i> .			

Translation: Why [are] you sitting alone...

Jethro pushes this further, "You are sitting here, alone, by yourself..." The implication is, "You can't be the only smart and fair-minded person out of all these people."

I am certain that Jethro heard a great many cases which were trivial. No doubt he asked himself, "Why is Moses, the leader of the Israelite nation, judging this minor issue?"

Exodus 18:14d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'am (עַם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
nâtsab (נָצַב) [pronounced naw-TSAH ^h V]	<i>stationed, left standing, stationing oneself, taking one's stand; standing [at the ready, firm]</i>	Niphal participle	Strong's #5324 BDB #662

Exodus 18:14d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of, because of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, with, by, besides, in addition to, to, toward, together with, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to</i>	preposition of relative proximity with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
bôqer (בֹּקֶר) [pronounced <i>BOH-ker</i>]	<i>morning, daybreak, dawn; the next morning</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #1242 BDB #133
‘ad (עַד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
Together, min...‘ad (מִן ... עַד) mean <i>from...to</i> or <i>both...and</i> ; as in <i>from soup to nuts</i> or <i>both young and old</i> .			
‘ereb (עֶרֶב) [pronounced <i>GEH-reb^v</i>]	<i>evening, sunset</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6153 BDB #787

Translation: ...with all the people standing by you from morning til sunset?”

Then Jethro adds, “...and all of these people are standing around you.” What Jethro does not say, but is probably a part of his concern: “Many of these matters being brought before you to judge are trivial matters. Why on earth should you, the leader of this nation, be judging them?”

Moses is trying to do everything. Before, when first called to lead the Hebrews, he wanted to stand back and watch and be an errand boy and have Aaron speak to the people. Now he is doing everything. He is leading the people, he is speaking to God, he is writing Scripture, he is offering sacrifices; and from morning until evening he is settling every single dispute that arose like an olden-day *People's Court*. With two million people, that is going to be quite the docket of court cases.

Interestingly enough, God does not stop Moses and say, “You need to delegate, son.” It is possible that Moses has little time to come to God in the **pre-Tabernacle** and speak with Him.

Exodus 18:14 **Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, so he asked, “What is this that you are doing for the people? Why [are] you sitting alone with all the people standing by you from morning til sunset?”** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Jethro, when he has time alone with Moses, asks him about the difficult tasks which he has taken on. That main task of solving everyone's problems was just too much.

You will notice that these are simply questions; and there is nothing negative that can be implied from them. These question may even get Moses to thinking about his situation.

Exodus 18:13–14 **And it was on the next day that Moses sat to judge the people. And the people stood by Moses from morning to sunset. Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, so he asked, “What is this**

that you are doing for the people? Why [are] you sitting alone with all the people standing by you from morning til sunset?" (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 18:13–14 On the next day, Moses sat to judge the people. The people stood by Moses from morning to night. Moses' father-in-law observed all that Moses did for the people, and he asked Moses, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why are you handling this on your own, while the people are standing before you from morning to night?" (Kukis paraphrase)

And so says Moses to his father-in-law, "Because come in unto me the people to inquire of Elohim. For is to them a word, they come in unto me and I have judged between a man and between his associate and I make known decrees of the Elohim and His laws."

Exodus
18:15–16

Moses answered his father-in-law, [saying,] "[I do this] because the people come to me to inquire of Elohim; for [because of] a dispute [lit., a word]. They come to me and I will make a judgement between a man and his fellow; then I make known the decrees of Elohim and His laws."

Moses answered his father-in-law, saying, "I do all of this because people come before me to know the will and judgment of God. They come with disputes between one another, and I make a judgement between the two parties, making known to them the decrees and laws of God."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Moses to his father-in-law, "Because come in unto me the people to inquire of Elohim. For is to them a word, they come in unto me and I have judged between a man and between his associate and I make known decrees of the Elohim and His laws."
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Mosheh said to his father in law, Because the people come to me to ask instruction from before the Lord. When they have (a matter) for judgment they come to me, and I adjudicate between a man and his neighbour, and make them to know the statutes of the Lord, and His laws.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Mosheh said to his father in law, Because the people come to me to inquire for instruction from before the Lord. When they have a matter for judgment, they come to me, and I judge between a man and his fellow, and make them to know the statutes and the law of the Lord.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Moses answered him: The people come to me to seek the judgment of God. And when any controversy falls out among them, they come to me to judge between them, and to shew the precepts of God, and his laws.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Mosha said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a matter, they come to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbour, and I make them know the statutes of God, and his laws."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Moses said to his father-in-law, Because the people come to me to inquire of God; And when they have a controversy, they come to me; and I judge between one and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And Moses says to his father-in-law, Because the people come to me to seek judgment from God. For whenever there is a dispute among them, and they come to me, I give judgment upon each, and I teach them the ordinances of God and his law.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Moses said to his father-in-law, Because the people come to me to get directions from God: And if they have any question between themselves, they come to me, and I am judge between a man and his neighbour, and I give them the orders and laws of God.
Easy English	Moses answered Jethro: 'The people come to me to discover God's commands. 16 When they cannot agree, they come to me. I decide between them and I tell them about God's laws and rules.'
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Then Moses said to his father-in-law, "The people come to me and ask me to ask for God's decision for their problem. If people have an argument, they come to me, and I decide which person is right. In this way I teach the people God's laws and teachings."
<i>The Message</i>	Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me with questions about God. When something comes up, they come to me. I judge between a man and his neighbor and teach them God's laws and instructions."
Names of God Bible	Moses answered his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to find out Elohim's will. Whenever they have a disagreement and bring it to me, I decide which person is right, and I tell them Elohim's laws and instructions."
NIRV	Moses answered, "The people come to me to find out what God wants them to do. Anytime they don't agree with one another, they come to me. I decide between them. I tell them about God's rules and instructions."
New Simplified Bible	Moses answered: »They come here to find out what God wants them to do. »They bring their complaints to me. I make decisions on the basis of God's laws.«

Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Moses answered, "Because they come here to find out what God wants them to do. They bring their complaints to me, and I make decisions on the basis of God's laws."
The Living Bible	"Well, because the people come to me with their disputes, to ask for God's decisions," Moses told him. "I am their judge, deciding who is right and who is wrong, and instructing them in God's ways. I apply the laws of God to their particular disputes."
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to learn God's will. When they argue, they come to me. And I judge between a man and his neighbor. I teach them the Laws of God."
New Living Translation	Moses replied, "Because the people come to me to get a ruling from God. When a dispute arises, they come to me, and I am the one who settles the case between the quarreling parties. I inform the people of God's decrees and give them his instructions."
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	Moses replied, "I am doing this because the people keep coming to me to find out what God desires. When they have a dispute about something, they come to me, and they ask me to decide which of them is right. I also tell them all of God's laws and instructions."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And Moses replied:
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'The people are coming to me to receive God's decisions. So, whenever they have a disagreement, they come to me and I judge each [case]. I teach them the Laws of God and [I judge by] His Laws.'

Beck's American Translation
Common English Bible

Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When a conflict arises between them, they come to me and I judge between the two of them. I also teach them God's regulations and instructions."

New Advent (Knox) Bible

They come to me, answered Moses, to find out what God's decision is. Some dispute arises among them, and they come to me so that I may make a just award between them, telling them of the decrees which God issues, and of his law.

Translation for Translators

Moses/I replied, "*I am doing this* because the people keep coming to me to find out what God desires. When they have a dispute about something, they come to me, and they ask me to decide which of them is right. I also tell them all of God's laws and instructions."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia Translation
Ferrar-Fenton Bible

When Moses replied to his father-in-law; "Because all the People come to me to enquire of the EVER-LIVING. Whoever among them has a dispute comes to me and I decide between man and man, and I make known the decision of GOD, and His laws."

God's Truth (Tyndale)

And Moses said unto his father in law: because the people came unto me to seek counsel of God. For when they have a matter, they come unto me, and I must judge between every man and his neighbor, and must show them the ordinances of God and his laws.

Lexham English Bible

And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to seek God. When {they have an issue}, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor, and I make known God's rule and his instructions."

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Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and instructions."

Urim-Thummim Version

And Moses replied to his father in law, because the people come to me to inquire of Elohim. When they have a matter they come to me and I judge between one and another, and I teach them to know the statutes of Elohim and his Laws.

Wikipedia Bible Project

And Moses said to his father in law: "Because the people come to me to petition God. Because when something happens, it comes to me, and I judge it, between a man and his peer. And I inform them of the laws of God, and his teaching."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)

Moses answered, "It is the people who come to me to know God's will. 16. When there is a dispute they bring it to me to decide between the two parties, and I teach them God's decrees and laws."

The Heritage Bible

And Moses said to his father in law, Because the people come to me to tread seeking God; When there is to them a word, they come to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor; and I cause them to know by seeing the enactments of God, and his laws.

New American Bible (2002)

Moses answered his father-in-law, "The people come to me to consult God. Whenever they have a disagreement, they come to me to have me settle the matter between them and make known to them God's decisions and regulations."

New American Bible (2011)

Moses answered his father-in-law, "The people come to me to consult God. Whenever they have a disagreement, they come to me to have me settle the matter between them and make known to them God's statutes and instructions."

New English Bible–1970	'The people come to me', Moses answered, 'to seek God's guidance. Whenever there is a dispute among them, they come to me, and I decide between man and man. I declare the statutes and laws of God.'
New Jerusalem Bible	Moses replied to his father-in-law, 'Because the people come to me to consult God. When they have a problem they come to me, and I give a ruling between the one and the other and make God's statutes and laws known to them.'
Revised English Bible–1989	"The people come to me to seek God's guidance," Moses answered. "Whenever there is a dispute among them, they come to me, and I decide between one party and the other. I make known the statutes and laws of God."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Moshe answered his father-in-law, "It's because the people come to me seeking God's guidance. Whenever they have a dispute, it comes to me; I judge between one person and another, and I explain to them God's laws and teachings."
exeGeses companion Bible	And Mosheh says to his in law, Because the people come to me to enquire of Elohim: when they have a word, they come to me; and I judge between man and friend and I have them know the statutes of Elohim and his torahs.
Kaplan Translation	'The people come to me to seek God,' replied Moses to his father-in-law. 'Whenever they have a problem, they come to me. I judge between man and his neighbor, and I teach God's decrees and laws.'
	to seek God (Ibn Ezra). Or, 'to learn God's will' (Targum; Rashi).
The Scriptures 1998	And Mosheh said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to seek Elohim. "When they have a matter, they come to me, and I rightly rule between one and another, and make known the laws of Elohim and His Torot."

Weird English, 𐤀𐤋𐤅𐤃 English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	AND MOSES SAYS TO HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, "BECAUSE THE PEOPLE COME TO ME TO SEEK JUDGMENT FROM THE THEOS (<i>Alpha & Omega</i>). FOR WHENEVER THERE IS A DISPUTE AMONG THEM, AND THEY COME TO ME, I GIVE JUDGMENT UPON EACH, AND I TEACH THEM THE ORDINANCES OF THE THEOS (<i>Alpha & Omega</i>) AND HIS LAW."
Awful Scroll Bible	Moses was to say to he, to whom he is being son-in-law of: The people were to come to enquire of he of mighty ones. With a concern they are to be coming, and I am to have given judgment between a man and his fellow, for I am to have made known the prescription of he of mighty ones, even his direction.
Concordant Literal Version	Moses said to his father-in-law: Because the people are coming to me to inquire of Elohim. When they come to have a matter of dispute they come to me, and I judge between a man and his associate, and I make known to them the statutes of the One, Elohim, and His laws.
exeGeses companion Bible	.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Moshe said unto his khoten, Because HaAm come unto me to inquire of Elohim; When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the chukkei HaElohim, and His torot.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible

Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to ask [about the will] of God. When they have a dispute they come to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor and I make known the statutes of God and His laws."

The Expanded Bible

Then Moses said to his father-in-law, "It is because the people come to me for God's help in solving their disagreements [^Lto seek/inquire of God]. When people have a disagreement [^Lmatter; case], they come to me, and I decide who is right [judge between a person and his neighbor]. I tell them God's laws [statutes; ordinances; requirements] and teachings [instructions; laws]."

Kretzmann's Commentary

And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God. Moses was God's ambassador to the people, God's visible representative, and so the people came to him for divine decisions in all matters of contention, and when they needed advice. When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God and His laws. By giving advice in all difficult matters and by rendering decisions in all disputes, Moses made known to the people the ordinances and the laws of God.

The Voice

Moses: These people come to me seeking direction from God. When two people are arguing *and can't resolve their differences*, they come to me; and I settle the matter between them. *This is one way* I help God's people understand His requirements and instructions.

Bible Translations with an Excess of Footnotes:*The Complete Tanach*

Moses said to his father in law, "For the people come to me to seek God.

For...come: Heb. אָבִי-יִי, the present tense. [Although, strictly speaking, אָבִי is the future tense, in this case it is used as the present, i.e., the people of Israel had already come to be judged.]

to seek God: [To be understood] as its Aramaic translation (Onkelos): עֲבֵתִמֵּל לִפְנֵי ה', to seek teaching from before the Lord.

If any of them has a case, he comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor, and I make known the statutes of God and His teachings."

If any of them has a case, he comes to me: The one who has the case comes to me.

*Kaplan Translation
NET Bible®*

Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire²⁷ of God. When they have a dispute,²⁸ it comes to me and I decide²⁹ between a man and his neighbor, and I make known the decrees of God and his laws."³⁰

^{27tn} The form is שִׁדְדֵל (lidoresh), the Qal infinitive construct giving the purpose. To inquire of God would be to seek God's will on a matter, to obtain a legal decision on a matter, or to settle a dispute. As a judge Moses is speaking for God, but as the servant of Yahweh Moses' words will be God's words. The psalms would later describe judges as "gods" because they made the right decisions based on God's Law.

^{28tn} Or "thing," "matter," "issue."

^{29tn} The verb שָׁפַט (shafat) means "to judge"; more specifically, it means to make a decision as an arbiter or umpire. When people brought issues to him, Moses decided between them. In the section of laws in Exodus after the Ten Commandments come the decisions, the מִשְׁפָּטִים (mishppatim).

^{30tn} The "decrees" or "statutes" were definite rules, stereotyped and permanent; the "laws" were directives or pronouncements given when situations arose. S. R. Driver suggests this is another reason why this event might have taken place after Yahweh had given laws on the mountain (Exodus, 165).

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and " Mosheh ^{Plucked outⁿ} said to his in-law, (because) the people will come to me to seek " Elohiym ^{Powersⁿ} , given that a (matter) will exist (for) them, it is coming to me and I will decide between (each) and his companion, and I will make known the customs of the " Elohiym ^{Powersⁿ} and his teachings,...
C. Thompson (updated) OT	And Moses said to his father in law, Because the people come to me to have a determination from God. For when a controversy happens among them and they come to me, I administer justice to every one, and teach them the statutes of God and his law.
Modern English Version	Then Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor, and I make known the statutes of God and His laws."
New European Version	Moses said to his father-in-law, Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a matter, they come to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbour, and I make them know the statutes of God, and His laws.
Updated Bible Version 2.17	And Moses said to his father-in-law, Because the people come to me to inquire of God: when they have a matter, it comes to me; and I judge between a man and his fellow man, and I make them know the statutes of God, and his laws.
Young's Updated LT	And Moses says to his father-in-law, "Because the people come unto me to seek God; when they have a matter, it has come unto me, and I have judged between a man and his neighbour, and made known the statutes of God, and His laws."

The gist of this passage: Moses tells Jethro that people come to him to settle disputes, and Moses applies the principles of God's integrity.

15-16

Exodus 18:15a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
chôthên (חֹתֵן) [pronounced <i>khoh-THAIN</i>]	<i>father-in-law, the wife's father</i>	Qal participle of verb; used as a substantive; masculine singular noun; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2859 BDB #368

Translation: Moses answered his father-in-law,...

Moses had a wonderful relationship with his father-in-law, and Moses answers him honestly, not necessarily understanding where his father-in-law might be going with these questions.

Exodus 18:15b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
bôw' (אוב) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (ל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'am (עם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
dârash (דָּרַשׁ) [pronounced daw-RASH]	<i>to seek, to make inquiries concerning, to consult, to investigate, to study, to follow, to inquire; to require</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #1875 BDB #205
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: ...[saying,] “[I do this] because the people come to me to inquire of Elohim;...

People came to Moses to resolve problems and disputes; to know what God's will is. Moses is obviously very connected to God and he knows **divine viewpoint**.

Now, I can just about guarantee you that Moses does not, after hearing the arguments, go off to his pre-Tabernacle and inquire of God. Probably, in every case, Moses simply says, “Listen, Charley Brown, you are in the wrong here, and you need to pay Lucy two days wages. Next case!”

It is interesting that, this people who often fought against Moses and against God; also come to Moses for judgments.

Don't misunderstand this verse. These people are not coming to Moses with questions about God; they are not coming to him for spiritual information. Insofar as they are concerned, Moses is their personal Judge Wapner¹³ and they go to him to get their revenge on someone else who has pissed them off. Ostensibly they say it is

¹³ Well, that certainly dates me. **The People's Court**. Had I said *Judge Judy*, that would have dated me as well. Perhaps I should have gone with Judge Marilyn Milian or Judge Mathis?

because Moses represents God to them and to let God judge over this matter of that; but, what it boils down to is they think they're right and they want everyone to know it. Furthermore, it was their entertainment of the day to go to court and watch these proceedings and to be able to tell someone else, "I was right and you were wrong."

Exodus 18:15 **Moses answered his father-in-law, [saying,] "[I do this] because the people come to me to inquire of Elohim;...** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Moses puts the best possible spin on what it is that he is doing, but he, as the leader of Israel, is really wasting his time doing this. It is possible that, in answering these questions posed by Jethro, that Moses himself is beginning to evaluate exactly what he is doing.

Have you ever been in a situation where you had too much work—work that you needed to delegate—but it seemed to overwhelm you so that you had no time to delegate? That is Moses' situation here.

Moses continues answering Jethro's questions.

Exodus 18:16a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command; business, occupation; case; something; manner</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: ...for [because of] a dispute [lit., a word]. They come to me...

Two people might have a dispute and they would come before Moses to have this dispute settled.

Kretzmann says that Moses is giving advice, but he is not just giving advice. Moses is not saying, "So, this is your dispute? Here is what I would suggest." Moses is not making suggestions; he is arbitrating and making judicial decisions. When people came to Moses, their case would be adjudicated and it was all over.

Exodus 18:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâphaṭ (שָׁפַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-FAHT</i>]	<i>to judge, to condemn, to punish; to defend [especially the poor and oppressed], to defend [one's cause] and deliver him from his enemies; to rule, to govern</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #8199 BDB #1047
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between</i>	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, each man, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between</i>	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107
rêa' (רֵעַ) [pronounced <i>RAY-ahg'</i>]	<i>associate, neighbor, colleague; companion, friend; beloved; fellow, acquaintance; fellow citizen; another person; one, another [in a reciprocal phrase]</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7453 BDB #945

Translation: ...and I will make a judgement between a man and his fellow;...

Moses would be the one to make the final determination on how their dispute plays out.

Perhaps this is some subtle arrogance on Moses' part. Who doesn't want to run the lives of everyone else? When you are given the chance to tell someone else what is wrong with their lives and how they can straighten themselves out, you jump at the chance. Especially if it is someone whom you are jealous of or who does not work as hard as you or has more stuff than you, etc. Furthermore, Moses was one of the very few mature believers there. He did not know what else to do. People had disputes and these disputes needed to be solved. It might have begun with a few minor altercations but now Moses had a court docket which lasted all day long.

Exodus 18:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Exodus 18:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâda' (יָדָע) [pronounced yaw-DAHG]	<i>to cause to know, to make one know, to instruct, to teach; to show, to reveal</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
chuqqîym (חֻקִּים) [pronounced khook-KEEM]	<i>decrees, those things which are decreed; statutes; boundaries, defined limitations; appointed portions of labor, tasks</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #2706 BDB #349
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
tôwrôwth (תּוֹרוֹת) [pronounced TOE-rowth]	<i>instructions, doctrines; [human and divine] laws, directions, regulations, protocol; customs; transliterated Torah</i>	feminine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8451 and #8452 BDB #435

Translation: ...then I make known the decrees of Elohim and His laws."

We have seen this before...a mention of the decrees and laws of God, prior to the **Mosaic Law** being given.

The first key word is the masculine plural construct of chuqqîym (חֻקִּים) [pronounced khook-KEEM], which means, *decrees, those things which are decreed; statutes; boundaries, defined limitations; appointed portions of labor, tasks*. Strong's #2706 BDB #349. Although this can be used as a specific, technical term; it can simply refer to the tasks or apportionment of labor set before the people of God by God. That would simply be their movement forward and any other things which God would have them do.

This is a construct, meaning that it is connected to the noun which follows, which is the masculine plural noun 'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM], along with the definite article. So that means, *of the God* or *of the Elohim*.

There is also the feminine plural noun tôwrôwth (תּוֹרוֹת) [pronounced TOE-rowth], which means, *instructions, doctrines; [human and divine] laws, directions, regulations, protocol; customs*. Strong's #8451 and #8452 BDB #435. Although this can be transliterated *Torah*, it is not so transliterated from the plural, for the most part. We can also understand this to be the less formal concept of *instructions, directions*. At this point, God has the people moving forward. God knows where they are going and what is going to happen; but this is not something that Moses necessarily knows.

At this point in our narrative, we do not have a list of laws or statutes specifically issued by God, apart from a few regulations involving the gathering of manna and yearly guidance when it comes to observing the **Passover**.

We also know the Mosaic Law to be a very formal, specific system of laws. There is no indication that this incident took place after the Ten Commandments were given; there is every evidence that this occurred in the time frame it appears to occur in, right after Moses has led the people into the desert-wilderness, after God overthrew the Egyptian armies of Pharaoh.

This phrase about the decrees and laws of God is found on several occasions prior to the giving of the Law; so there is no reason to try to fit this particular set of verses into a time period after the Law is given.

At this point in time, Moses was developing wisdom and the thinking of God; so he was able to make some divine viewpoint determinations. However, there was no specific set of laws given prior to this time, apart from the principles which were probably known to the people from Egyptian law and from the books of Genesis and Job (I assume they had the former, and possibly the latter).

Now, was Moses going out too far ahead of God? Did God have a plan and a set of laws, and Moses was making up his own? Here is how I see it: Moses is very steeped in law (which he would have learned as an Egyptian) and in God's character, more than any other person there. Remember that he was in training to become a pharaoh, so he would have learned the laws of Egypt; and possibly from surrounding regions and countries (Acts 7:22). Whenever God gave the people an order, it would come through Moses. For the most part, there have been no actual societal laws given by God (apart from the manna and Passover regulations). Nevertheless, the people have had disputes. On occasion, Moses may have gone to God about these complaints; but the solution, in many cases, is simply, common sense and **divine establishment** thinking.

There appear to be some overriding principles—principles that the sons of Israel are slow to understand. God has taken them out of Egypt and is going to give them the land of Canaan; and God is guaranteeing their existence and care. We have seen several instances where the people reveal their lack of understanding by making their complaints to Moses as if he is somehow responsible for everything bad that happens to them.

Exodus 18:16 *...for [because of] a dispute [lit., a word]. They come to me and I will make a judgement between a man and his fellow; then I make known the decrees of Elohim and His laws.*" (Kukis mostly literal translation)

"This is what I do," Moses explains. "If they have a dispute or a problem, they come to me, and I settle the matter." What Moses would state—mostly operating on the Egyptian law which he learned as filtered through his understanding of God. He would consider this to be *the statutes of God and His laws*. My understanding here is, Moses is taking the law which he learned in Egypt and modifying it, when necessary, to fit the character of God. They don't have anything else at this point.

If you know the book of Exodus of the history of the Hebrew people, then you know what is coming; but Moses does not know what is next; and the people do not know either.

When it comes to the narrative which we are studying, I lean toward these things being written down as they happen. Throughout Exodus, we have gone from one place to the next; and these places and their order will be confirmed in the book of Numbers (one chapter is devoted to all the stops made by Moses and the people of Israel). There have been specific times—like the song sung after God killed the Egyptian soldiers—where all of the writing had to occur right then and there. That is, there was no place for Moses to write this song down a week or two later. They sang it right there when they were on the shore and as they walked away from that shore. That means that Moses wrote the song right then and there.

For these reasons, I understand this chapter to simply occur in the order that it falls in the book of Exodus. This is not the view of certain other commentators (who would be wrong at this point).

Exodus 18:15–16 Moses answered his father-in-law, [saying,] “[I do this] because the people come to me to inquire of Elohim; for [because of] a dispute [lit., *a word*]. They come to me and I will make a judgement between a man and his fellow; then I make known the decrees of Elohim and His laws.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 18:15–16 Moses answered his father-in-law, saying, “I do all of this because people come before me to known the will and judgment of God. They come with disputes between one another, and I make a judgement between the two parties, making known to them the decrees and laws of God.” (Kukis paraphrase)

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Jethro advises Moses

And so said a father-in-law of Moses unto him, “No good the word that you are doing, [for] wearing out you will wear out, both you and the people with you, for heavy from you the word. You are unable to do him by yourself.

Exodus
18:17–18

Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “[This is] no good the thing which you are doing, [for] you will surely wear out both you and the people with you, for this thing [is too] hard for you. You are unable to do it by yourself.

Moses’ father-in-law gave Moses some good advice: “This is not good, what you are doing, acting as the only judge of the people. You will wear yourself out; and the people too, because you simply cannot get to them all. This thing is too much for one man; you cannot do this by yourself.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so said a father-in-law of Moses unto him, “No good the word that you are doing, [for] wearing out you will wear out, both you and the people with you, for heavy from you the word. You are unable to do him by yourself.
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum (Onkelos)	But the father in law of Mosheh said to him, The thing thou art doing is not right; with weariness thou wilt be weary, thou and also this people who are with thee; for the thing is too weighty for thee, thou art not able to do it by thyself.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the father-in law of Mosheh said to him, This thing that thou art doing is not well ordered; thou wilt verily wear thyself away. Aharon also, and his sons, and the elders of thy people, because the thing is heavier than thou art, able to do by thyself, (should take part in it.)
Revised Douay-Rheims	But he said: The thing you do is not good. You are spent with foolish labour, both you and this people that is with you: the business is above your strength, you alone can not bear it.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Mosha's father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do is not good. You will surely wear away, both you, and this people that is with you; for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to perform it yourself alone.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Moses father-in-law said to him, The thing that you are doing is not good. You will surely wear yourself out, both you, and all this people that is with you; for this thing is too heavy for you; you are not able to do it alone.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And the father-in-law of Moses said to him, Thou dost not this thing rightly, thou wilt wear away with intolerable weariness, both those and all this people which is with thee: this thing is hard, thou wilt not be able to endure it thyself alone.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Moses' father-in-law said to him, What you are doing is not good. Your strength and that of the people will be completely used up: this work is more than you are able to do by yourself.
Easy English	The father of Moses' wife replied: 'The thing that you do is not good. Both you and the people who come to you will become too tired. The work is too much for you. You cannot do it alone.
Easy-to-Read Version—2001	But Moses' father-in-law said to him, "This isn't the right way to do this. It is too much work for you to do alone. You can't do this job by yourself. It wears you out. And it makes the people tired too!
Easy-to-Read Version—2006	.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then Jethro said, "You are not doing this right. You will wear yourself out and these people as well. This is too much for you to do alone.
<i>The Message</i>	Moses' father-in-law said, "This is no way to go about it. You'll burn out, and the people right along with you. This is way too much for you—you can't do this alone.
NIRV	Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing isn't good. You will just get worn out. And so will these people who come to you. There's too much work for you. You can't possibly handle it by yourself.

Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Jethro replied: That isn't the best way to do it. You and the people who come to you will soon be worn out. The job is too much for one person; you can't do it alone.
The Living Bible	"It's not right!" his father-in-law exclaimed. "You're going to wear yourself out—and if you do, what will happen to the people? Moses, this job is too heavy a burden for you to try to handle all by yourself.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. You and the people with you will become tired and weak. For the work is too much for you. You cannot do it alone.
New Living Translation	"This is not good!" Moses' father-in-law exclaimed. "You're going to wear yourself out—and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	Jethro said to him, "What you are doing is not good for you or for the people. You and these people will wear yourselves out! This work is too much for you. You are not able to do it by yourself.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	However, Moses' father-in-law told him: 'You aren't handling this thing right, for this will just wear you down... and your people will get tired of it too. You won't be able to keep on doing this all by yourself.
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing isn't good. You will end up totally wearing yourself out, both you and these people who are with you. The work is too difficult for you. You can't do it alone.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	It is ill conceived, said Jethro, this practice of thine. Thou wilt wear out thy own strength, and the patience of this people that goes with thee, and to no purpose; it is beyond thy powers to sustain this office all alone.

Translation for Translators Jethro said to him/me, "What you are doing is not good *for you or for the people*. You and these people will ◀wear yourselves out/become exhausted▶! This work is too much for one person. You are not able to do it by yourself.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia Translation	Moses' father-in-law told him, "This thing that you are doing is not a good idea. You will wear yourself out! and not only you, but all these people with you! This administrative burden is too heavy for you; you can't go on doing this all alone!"
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Advice of Jethro on it. But the father-in-law of Moses answered him; "The practice that you follow is not good. You are not prudent, nor are this people who are with you; for their affairs are more than you are able to bear alone.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And his father in law said unto him: it is not well that you do. You do unwisely and also this people that is with you: because the thing is too grievous for you, and you are not able to do it your self alone.
Lexham English Bible	And the father-in-law of Moses said to him, "The thing that you are doing is not good. Surely you will wear out, both you and this people who [are] with you, because the thing [is too] {difficult} for you. You are not able to do it alone.
NIV, ©2011	Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Moses's father in law said to him: It is not good, the thing that you are doing. You will wilt, wilt, you and this people with you, because the thing is weightier than you, you could not do it alone.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And Moses' father in law said to him, The word that you do is not good. Withering away, you will wither away, both you and this people who is with you, because this word is too heavy for you; you are not able to do it yourself alone.
New American Bible (2011)	"What you are doing is not wise," Moses' father-in-law replied. "You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. The task is too heavy for you; [Nm 11:14] you cannot do it alone.
New Jerusalem Bible	Moses' father-in-law then said to him, 'What you are doing is not right. You will only tire yourself out, and the people with you too, for the work is too heavy for you. You cannot do it all yourself.
Revised English Bible—1989	His father-in-law said to him, "This is not the best way to do it. You will only wear yourself out and wear out the people who are here. The task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Moshe's father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing isn't good. You will certainly wear yourself out — and not only yourself, but these people here with you as well. It's too much for you — you can't do it alone, by yourself.
exeGesés companion Bible Kaplan Translation	. Moses' father-in-law said to him, 'What you are doing is not good. You are going to wear yourself out, along with this nation that is with you. Your responsibility is too great. You cannot do it all alone.

Weird English, ʘlɔɛ English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	AND THE FATHER-IN-LAW OF MOSES SAID TO HIM, "YOU DON'T DO THIS THING CORRECTLY, YOU WILL WEAR AWAY WITH INTOLERABLE WEARINESS, BOTH YOURSELF AND ALL THIS PEOPLE WHICH IS WITH YOU. THIS THING IS HARD, YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ENDURE IT YOURSELF ALONE.
Awful Scroll Bible	Moses, of he being the son-in-law of, was to say: Is the concern you is to be effecting beneficial? - As to drop down, was you to drop down because of the people, for the concern is too burdensome - was you able to effect it? -
Concordant Literal Version exeGeses companion Bible	. And the in law of Mosheh says to him, The word you work is not good: in wilting, you wilt - both you and this people with you; for this word is too heavy for you: you are not able to work it yourself alone.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Moshe's khoten said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not tov. Thou wilt surely wear out, both thou, and HaAm hazeh that is with thee; for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Jethro Counsels Moses Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you are doing is not good. You will certainly wear out both yourself and these people who are with you, because the task is too heavy for you [to bear]; you cannot do it alone.
The Expanded Bible	Moses' father-in-law said to him, "You are not doing this right [^L What you are doing is not good]. You and the people who come to you [^L are with you] will get too tired [wear out]. This is too much work for you [^L The matter is too heavy for you]; you can't do it by yourself.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. The practice which had been inaugurated by Moses was not good policy. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou and this people that is with thee. Moses would use up, and thus waste, all his strength and energy, and the people would be worn out with the chafing of suspense as they waited. For this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. It was a plain case of the limitation of physical strength, and Jethro's advice was good political wisdom, sound common sense.
The Voice	Jethro: What you are doing is not good <i>for you</i> . The responsibility is just too much. You are going to wear yourself out. Not only that, you're going to wear out the people too. You can't do it all by yourself.

Bible Translations with an Excess of Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach	Moses' father in law said to him, "The thing you are doing is not good. Moses' father-in-law said: As a token of honor, Scripture refers to him as the king's father-in-law [and not by his name]. You will surely wear yourself out both you and these people who are with you for the matter is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.
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You will surely wear yourself out: Heb. לְבַתֵּךְ לִבְנִי. As the Targum renders: [You will surely wear yourself out,] but the expression is an expression of withering, *fleistre* in Old French, like [these examples:] “even the leaves will be withered (לִבְנִי)” (Jer. 8:13); “as a leaf withers (הִלָּע לִבְנִי) from a vine, etc.” (Isa. 34:4), which withers both from the heat and from the cold, and its strength weakens, and it is worn out.

both you: הָתְּךָ־אֶמְּךָ lit., also you. [This comes] to include Aaron, Hur, and the 70 elders.

is too heavy for you: Its weight is greater than your strength.

Kaplan Translation
NET Bible®

Moses' father-in-law said to him, “What³¹ you are doing is not good! You will surely wear out,³² both you and these people who are with you, for this is too³³ heavy a burden³⁴ for you; you are not able to do it by yourself.

³¹tn Heb “the thing.”

³²tn The verb means “to fall and fade” as a leaf (Ps 1:3). In Ps 18:45 it is used figuratively of foes fading away, failing in strength and courage (S. R. Driver, *Exodus*, 166). Here the infinitive absolute construction heightens the meaning.

³³tn Gesenius lists the specialized use of the comparative *min* (נ) where with an adjective the thought expressed is that the quality is too difficult for the attainment of a particular aim (GKC 430 §133.c).

³⁴tn Here “a burden” has been supplied.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and the in-law of " Mosheh ^{Plucked out} " said to him, the (matter) which you are doing is not functional, you will :surely: fade, (both) you and this people which are with you, given that the (matter) is heavier than you, you will not be able to do him (by) your<self>,...
Charles Thompson OT	Thereupon Moses' father in law said to him, Thou dost not transact this business right. Both thou and this people with thee must needs be worn down by this intolerable service. This business is too fatiguing for thee. Thou canst not perform it thyself alone.
Context Group Version	And Moses' father-in-law said to him, The thing that you do is not good. You will surely wear away, both you, and this people that is with you: for the thing is too heavy for you; you are not able to perform it yourself alone.
New American Standard B.	Jethro Counsels Moses Moses' father-in-law said to him, “The thing that you are doing is not good. You will surely wear out, both yourself and these [Lit <i>this</i>] people who are with you, for the task [Lit <i>matter</i>] is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.
New European Version	Moses' father-in-law said to him, The thing that you do is not good. You will surely wear away, both you, and this people that is with you; for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to perform it yourself alone.
New King James Version	So Moses' father-in-law said to him, “The thing that you do is not good. Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself.
A Voice in the Wilderness	And Moses' father-in-law said to him, The thing that you do is not good. Both you and these people who are with you will droop to exhaustion. For this thing is too much of a burden for you; you are not able to do it by yourself.
Young's Updated LT	And the father-in-law of Moses says unto him, “The thing which you are doing is not good; you will surely wear away, both you, and this people which is with you, for the thing is too heavy for you, you are not able to do it by yourself.

The gist of this passage: Jethro tells Moses that he will wear himself out by trying to be the single mediator of Israel.

17-18

Exodus 18:17a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'amar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
chôthên (חֹתֵן) [pronounced khoh-THAIN]	<i>father-in-law, the wife's father</i>	Qal participle of verb; used as a substantive; masculine singular noun; construct form	Strong's #2859 BDB #368
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced moh-SHEH]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: Moses' father-in-law said to him,...

Moses and his father-in-law had the sort of relationship, where his father-in-law could speak honestly and frankly with him. He could simply say, "Listen, here is what the problem is." Or, "Listen, I have an opinion on this." Given the circumstances and the way the people have acted, there are few people who could do this.

Exodus 18:17b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
tôwbâh (טוֹבָה) [pronounced TOH ^B -vaw]	<i>welfare, benefit, good, good things</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #2896 BDB #375
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw ^B -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command; business, occupation; case; something; manner</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

Exodus 18:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
'âsâh (עֹשֶׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH]	<i>doing, making, manufacturing, constructing, fashioning, forming, preparing; producing</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

Translation: ..."[This is] no good the thing which you are doing,...

"What you are doing is not good," Jethro explains to Moses. Moses is holding court from morning til night; and Jethro can tell that this is too much for him. However, Jethro does not appear to sugar-coat this or justify it. In fact, the first words spoken by Jethro are the words *not good*. When word occur at the beginning of a thought, this suggests that they are the most important words that Jethro has for Moses. "Not good," Jethro says to Moses.

In this verse we have dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw-BAWR] again, which can mean *word, matter, thing*. In this case, even *situation* is acceptable. The 2nd masculine singular personal pronoun plus the Qal active participle of 'âsâh (עֹשֶׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH] means *what you are doing*. Jethro has some **spiritual maturity** and he can see that what Moses is doing is not working out as it should. Moses has shouldered far too much responsibility. What he needs to do is to delegate. A good executive can delegate.

Application: One of the things that can make a good president (or any political leader) is one who can choose a cabinet with integrity and then delegate responsibilities responsibly. A great company president can choose and promote outstanding vice presidents and administrative assistants to the top and delegate the responsibility to them. A great movie producer has to delegate authority to the director, the casting agency, the sound effects crew, the cameramen, etc. There is no way that one person can do it all. A good pastor is not sweeping up afterwards, typing thank you cards, making calls concerning repairs to be done on the church, counting and depositing money from the offering, turning out the lights at night and locking the doors; nor is he counseling as a third-rate psychologist. He is studying God's Word and presenting his findings to his flock. He has delegated the responsibility for the other things to those under him.

Moses is not delegating anything unless specifically told to do so by God.

Exodus 18:17 **Moses' father-in-law said to him, "[This is] no good the thing which you are doing,...** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

After what appears to be a day of observation, Jethro comes right out with it. "What you are doing is a bad idea," he tells Moses.

He has more to say and Moses lets him have his say.

Exodus 18:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâbêl (נָבֵל) [pronounced naw- ^B VAIL]	<i>to sink down, to drop down, to languish, to wear out, to wither and fall, to fade; to be senseless, to be foolish</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #5034 BDB #614 & #615
nâbêl (נָבֵל) [pronounced naw- ^B VAIL]	<i>to sink down, to drop down, to languish, to wear out, to wither and fall, to fade; to be senseless, to be foolish</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5034 BDB #614 & #615
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>both...and, furthermore...as well as, also...also, that...so; either...or (but not used disjunctively)</i>	when gam is repeated	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	<i>you (often, the verb to be is implied)</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
wê (or vê) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'am (עַם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'îm (עִם) [pronounced geem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Translation: ...[for] you will surely wear out both you and the people with you,...

"You will wear yourself out," Jethro warns his son-in-law. This is not good for the people either, because they are standing there all day long waiting for their cases to be heard.

When the word gam (גַּם) [pronounced gam] is used twice in close succession, it means *both...and*. The demonstrative pronoun used with people is zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh] is properly rendered *this* rather than *these*. It is the near demonstrative pronoun and it could be rendered *this, here, this here, in this*.

Exodus 18:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
kâbêd (כָּבֵד) [pronounced kaw ^b -VAYD]	<i>heavy, overweight, abundant, numerous, dull; hard, difficult, burdensome, grievous; severe; very oppressive, numerous, rich</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #3515 BDB #458
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command; business, occupation; case; something; manner</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182

Translation: ...for this thing [is too] hard for you.

“What you have taken upon yourself is just too much for any one man,” Jethro explains. Obviously, he is a man who can objectively view what Moses is doing.

Exodus 18:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לֹא or אֵין) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâkôl (יָכוֹל) [also yâkôwl (יָכוֹל)] [pronounced yaw-COAL]	<i>to be able, can, to have the ability, to have the power to; to be able to bear; to be able to bring oneself [to do anything]; to be lawful, to be permitted; to be powerful, to prevail</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3201 BDB #407
With the negative, this means <i>cannot, to be unable to, to lack the ability to, to be powerless to, to lack permission to, to not be permitted to; to lack the power to.</i>			
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ʿaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to produce, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Exodus 18:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bad (בַּד) [pronounced <i>bahd</i>]	<i>separation, by itself, alone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #905 BDB #94
Together, the lamed preposition and bad (בַּד) mean <i>in a state of separation, by itself, alone, only; apart</i> .			
With the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix, this means, <i>by yourself [alone]</i> .			

Translation: You are unable to do it by yourself.

"Simply speaking," Jethro says, "This is not a job for one man. Not even if that man is you!"

Moses did have support personnel, but because of the large number of people coming to him, coming to that one place. If he had any aides, then his aides were being used inefficiently. Surely you can have two people do the same job with the same number of assistants and one can complete it and another can't even get it half finished. Even in both cases all parties involved can be working. Now it is possible that some of Moses' aides were standing around waiting for decisions to be made; but then if they were there 12–16 hours per day, each and every day except for the **Sabbath**, even if they just stood and did nothing for three or four hours a day, they were still exhausted and worn down.

Jethro in Exodus 18:17–18 (a graphic); from **Bethany United Church**; accessed July 19, 2023.

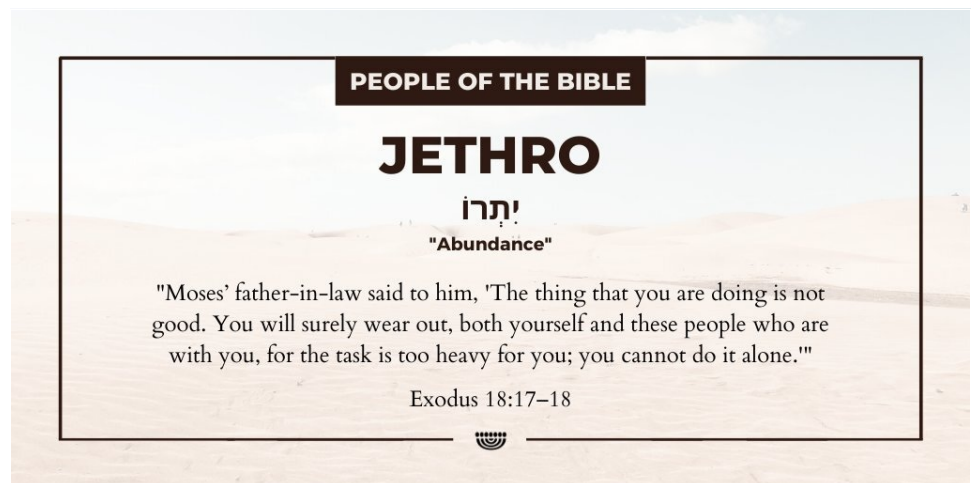
There is an additional problem, not mentioned by Jethro. If Moses attempted to do everything, he also would be setting a bad precedent. No one man can do everything. At some point in time, there will be a new leader. Is that man supposed to do everything?

Exodus 18:18 ...[for] you will surely wear outw both you and the people with you, for this thing [is too] hard for you. You are unable to do it by yourself. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Jethro tells Moses that what he is doing is inefficient. He has taken on too much.

Exodus 18:17–18 Moses' father-in-law said to him, "[This is] no good the thing which you are doing, [for] you will surely wear out both you and the people with you, for this thing [is too] hard for you. You are unable to do it by yourself. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 18:17–18 Moses' father-in-law gave Moses some good advice: "This is not good, what you are doing, acting as the only judge of the people. You will wear yourself out; and the people too, because you simply cannot get to them all. This thing is too much for one man; you cannot do this by yourself. (Kukis paraphrase)



I believe that part of the key to understanding what Jethro is saying is, to recognize that he is speaking Hebrew to Moses, but that this is not his first language. Therefore, there are some questionable syntax errors in what he says. Twice, Jethro uses a wâw conjunction with imperfect verbs; whereas, typically, one uses a wâw consecutive with imperfect verbs. There is one time that he uses a feminine suffix when he probably meant to use a masuclin suffix. Bear that in mind, if you read the Hebrew word tables.

Jethro has just seen Moses go through a full day's work as Israel's sole judge, and he has some comments—in fact, a critique. These are Jethro's words to Moses:

Now listen in my voice [and] I will counsel you: and is Elohim with you. Do you to the people in front of Elohim and bring near you the words unto Elohim. And you have taught them the decrees and the laws. And you have made known to them they way they will walk in her, and the work that they will do.

Exodus
18:19–20

Now, hear my voice [and] I will advise you, for [lit., and] Elohim is with you. [This is what] you will do for the people before Elohim: you will bring near [their] disputes before Elohim; and you will teach them the statutes and the laws. And you will make known to them they way in which they should walk; and they will do the work [which you have been doing].

Please hear my voice, son-in-law, and take my advice. Clearly, God is with you. Let me suggest how you should deal with the people before God. Teach them all God's statutes and His laws; and make them know the way in which they should walk. Then they can do much of the work that you have been doing.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Now listen in my voice [and] I will counsel you: and is Elohim with you. Do you to the people in front of Elohim and bring near you the words unto Elohim. And you have taught them the decrees and the laws. And you have made known to them they way they will walk in her, and the work that they will do.
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum (Onkelos)	Now hearken to me, I will give thee counsel, and the Word of the Lord shall be thy helper. Be thou for the people the seeker of instruction from the presence of the Lord, to bring the matters before the Lord: and thou shalt admonish them in the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which to walk, and the work that must be done.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	Now hearken to me and I will advise thee; and may the Word of the Lord be thy helper! When thou art with the people who seek instruction from before the Lord, thou shouldst take their affair before the Lord, and give them counsel about the statutes and laws, make them understand the prayer they are to offer in the house of congregation, the manner of visiting the sick, of burying the dead, of being fruitful In doing good, and in the work and process of justice, and how to conduct themselves among the wicked.
Revised Douay-Rheims	But hear my words and counsels, and God shall be with you. be to the people in those things that pertain to God, to bring their words to him: And to shew the people the ceremonies and the manner of worshipping, and the way wherein they ought to walk, and the work that they ought to do.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Listen now to my voice. I will give you counsel, and God be with you. You represent the people before God, and bring the causes to God. You shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and shall show them the way in which they must walk, and the work that they must do.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Listen now to my voice, I will give you counsel, and God shall be with you; you must become a teacher from God to the people, to bring their disputes before God; And

you shall warn them to keep the ordinances and laws that you may show them how to conduct themselves and the works that they must do.

Updated Brenton (Greek)

Now then hearken to me, and I will advise thee, and God shall be with thee: be thou to the people in the things pertaining to God, and thou shalt bring their matters to God. And thou shalt testify to them the ordinances of God and his law, and thou shalt shew to them the ways in which they shall walk, and the works which they shall do.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English

Give ear now to my suggestion, and may God be with you: you are to be the people's representative before God, taking their causes to him: Teaching them his rules and his laws, guiding them in the way they have to go, and making clear to them the work they have to do.

Easy English

Now listen to me! I will give you some good ideas, and God will make you strong. You must be the person who speaks to God, for the Israelites. Bring their quarrels to him. Teach them the rules and laws. Show them how they should live. Explain to them the things that they must do.

Easy-to-Read Version–2006

Now, listen to me. Let me give you some advice. And I pray God will be with you. You should continue listening to the problems of the people. And you should continue to speak to God about these things. You should explain God's laws and teachings to the people. Warn them not to break the laws. Tell them the right way to live and what they should do. But you should also choose some of the people to be judges and leaders. A portion of v. 21 is included for context.

Good News Bible (TEV)

Now let me give you some good advice, and God will be with you. It is right for you to represent the people before God and bring their disputes to him. You should teach them God's commands and explain to them how they should live and what they should do.

The Message

Now listen to me. Let me tell you how to do this so that God will be in this with you. Be there for the people before God, but let the matters of concern be presented to God. Your job is to teach them the rules and instructions, to show them how to live, what to do.

Names of God Bible

Now listen to me, and I'll give you some advice. May **Elohim** be with you! You must be the people's representative to **Elohim** and bring their disagreements to **Elohim**. You must instruct them in the laws and the teachings, show them how to live, and tell them what to do.

NIRV

Listen to me. I'll give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must speak to God for the people. Take their problems to him. Teach them his rules and instructions. Show them how to live and what to do.

New Simplified Bible

»Listen to the advice I give you. May God be with you! You must be the people's representative to God and bring their disagreements to him.
»You must instruct them in the laws and the teachings. Show them how to live and tell them what to do.

Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.

God will help you if you follow my advice. You should be the one to speak to God for the people, and you should teach them God's laws and show them what they must do to live right.

The Living Bible

Now listen, and let me give you a word of advice, and God will bless you: Be these people's lawyer—their representative before God—bringing him their questions to

	decide; you will tell them his decisions, teaching them God's laws, and showing them the principles of godly living.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	Now listen to me. I will tell you what you should do, and God be with you. You speak for the people before God. Bring the troubles to God. Then teach them the Laws. Make them know the way they must walk and the work they must do.
New Living Translation	Now listen to me, and let me give you a word of advice, and may God be with you. You should continue to be the people's representative before God, bringing their disputes to him. Teach them God's decrees, and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their lives.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	Now listen to what I will tell you to do. If you do what I suggest, God will help you. You should continue to speak to God and tell him about the people's disputes. You should also teach them what God has commanded and instructed you. You should also explain to them how they should conduct their lives and the things that they should do.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	'You can be [the one] who [leads] the people in matters that pertain to God, and you can take their problems before God. You should also [teach] them God's [ways] and His Laws, and show them how to act and the things that they should be doing.
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	Now listen to me and let me give you some advice. And may God be with you! Your role should be to represent the people before God. You should bring their disputes before God yourself. Explain the regulations and instructions to them. Let them know the way they are supposed to go and the things they are supposed to do.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Here is a word of advice for thee; do but listen, and God will speed thee. Thy part is to be the representative of this people with God, referring all their affairs to him, prescribing to them rite and observance, custom to be kept and duty to be done.
Translation for Translators	Now listen to some good advice [MTY] I will give to you. <i>If you do what I suggest</i> , God will help you. You should continue to speak to God and tell him about the people's disputes. You should <i>also</i> teach the people what God has commanded and instructed you. You should also explain to them how they should conduct their lives, and the things that they should do.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia Translation	"Now listen to me, and I will give you some advice, and God will be with you: You go to God, as a representative of the people, so that you may bring their cases to God. Then teach them all the statutes and laws, and show them the way they should walk, and the deeds they have to do."
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Therefore listen to my voice. I will advise you, and GOD will be with you. Let now the People appear before GOD, and bring their affairs to GOD, and instruct them in the decisions of His laws, and inform them the way they should walk in, and the acts they should do.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	But hear my voice, and I will give you counsel, and God shall be with you. Be you unto the people to Godward, and bring the causes unto God and provide them ordinances and laws, and show them the way wherein they must walk and the works that they must do.
Lexham English Bible	Now listen to my voice; I will advise you, and may God be with you. You be for the people before God, and you bring the issues to God. And you warn them [of] the rules and the instructions, and you make known to them the way in which they must walk and the work that they must do.

Urim-Thummim Version	Listen now to my voice, I will give you counsel and Elohim will be with you. You must be Elohim's representative for the people and bring their business to Him. And you will teach them statutes and Laws and will show them the way where they must walk, and the work that they must do.
Wikipedia Bible Project	.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	Now attentively hear my voice; I will advise you, and God shall be with you: You be for the people in front of God, and you bring the words to God; And you shall enlighten them on enactments and laws, and shall cause them to know by seeing the way where they must walk and the work that they must do.
New American Bible (2011)	* Now, listen to me, and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. Act as the people's representative before God, and bring their disputes to God. Enlighten them in regard to the statutes and instructions, showing them how they are to conduct themselves and what they are to do. * [18:19–20] By emphasizing Moses' mediatorial role for the people before God in regard to God's statutes and instructions, this story about the institution of Israel's judiciary prepares for Moses' role in the upcoming revelation of the law at Sinai.
New Jerusalem Bible	Now listen to the advice I am going to give you, and God be with you! Your task is to represent the people to God, to lay their cases before God, and to teach them the statutes and laws, and show them the way they ought to follow and how they ought to behave.
Revised English Bible–1989	Now listen to me: take my advice, and God be with you. It is for you to be the people's representative before God, and bring their disputes to him, to instruct them in the statutes and laws, and teach them how they must behave and what they must do.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	So listen now to what I have to say. I will give you some advice, and God will be with you. You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases to God. You should also teach them the laws and the teachings, and show them how to live their lives and what work they should do.
Kaplan Translation	'Now listen to me. I will give you advice, and God will be with you. You must be God's representative for the people, and bring [their] concerns to God. Clarify [Or, 'warn' (Ibn Ezra)] the decrees and laws for [the people]. Show them the path they must take, and the things they must do.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	"Now listen to my voice. Let me counsel you and Elohim be with you: Stand before Elohim for the people, and you shall bring the matters to Elohim. "And you shall enlighten them <i>concerning</i> the laws and the Torot, and show them the way in which they should walk and the work which they do.

Weird English, ©ld English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	NOW THEN HEARKEN TO ME, AND I WILL ADVISE YOU, AND THE THEOS (<i>Alpha & Omega</i>) SHALL BE WITH YOU. BE YOU TO THE PEOPLE IN THE THINGS PERTAINING TO THE THEOS (<i>Alpha & Omega</i>), AND YOU SHALL BRING THEIR MATTERS TO THE THEOS (<i>Alpha & Omega</i>). AND YOU SHALL TESTIFY TO THEM THE ORDINANCES OF THE THEOS (<i>Alpha & Omega</i>) AND HIS LAW, AND YOU SHALL SHOW TO THEM THE WAYS IN WHICH THEY SHALL WALK, AND THE WORKS WHICH THEY SHALL DO.
Awful Scroll Bible	Be listening to my frivolity, I was to give you advice, He of mighty ones was to come about to the people, even against he of mighty ones, are they to have brought in

	their concern for to be of mighty ones. You is to have given them light of the prescription and the law, and is to have made known to them the way they were to walk, and the work they were to effect.
Concordant Literal Version	Now, hearken to my voice. Let me counsel you, and may Elohim come to be with you. Be you for the people toward the One, Elohim, and you bring the matters to the One, Elohim. You will warn them with the statutes and the laws and make known to them the way in which they shall go and the deeds which they shall do.
exeGesés companion Bible	Hearken now to my voice, I counsel you: and Elohim is with you: you become for the people in front of Elohim, to bring the words to Elohim: and enlighten them statutes and torahs and have them know the way to walk and the work to work:...
Jubilee Bible 2000	Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people before God that thou may submit the causes unto God. And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws and shalt show them the way in which they must walk and the work that they must do.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	Shema (pay heed) now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and may Elohim be with thee; be thou for HaAm before HaElohim, that thou mayest bring the disputes unto HaElohim; And thou shalt teach them chukkim and torot, and shalt show them the derech wherein they must walk, and the ma'aseh that they must do.
Rotherham's <i>Emphasized B.</i>	Now, hearken thou to my voice—let me counsel thee, and may God be with thee: Be, thou, for the people, in front of God, so shalt, thou, bring the matters unto God; and shalt cause to shine upon them, the statutes and the laws,—and make known to them the way wherein they should go, and the work they should do.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Now listen to ^[b] me; ^[c] I will advise you, and may God be with you [to confirm my advice]. You shall represent the people before God. You shall bring their disputes and causes to Him. You shall teach them the decrees and laws. You shall show them the way they are to live and the work they are to do. ^[b] Exodus 18:19 Lit my voice. ^[c] Exodus 18:19 Instead of speaking directly to Moses, God used Jethro. Jethro's willingness to speak and Moses' willingness to listen reflects beautifully on the spiritual and emotional maturity of both men and the value of such a relationship.
The Expanded Bible	Now listen to me, and I will give you some advice. I want God to be with you. You must speak to God for the people and tell him about their ·disagreements [cases]. Warn them about the ·laws [statutes; ordinances; requirements] and ·teachings [instructions; laws], and ·teach [make known to] them the ·right way to live [^l way they should go] and what they should do.
Kretzmann's Commentary	Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee; Jethro knew that his advice would meet with the approval of God. Be thou for the people to God-ward that thou mayest bring the causes unto God; Moses was to represent the people in all cases in which they sought right and justice before God; he was to take the place of God toward the people, the visible representative of the real Ruler of Israel. And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them, let them know, teach them, the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moses was to retain for himself the instruction of the people, both as to their general behavior and mode of living and as to their course in individual matters; he was to be their teacher in all questions of principle.

The Voice

Jethro: I am going to give you *a piece of* advice, so listen up and God will be with you. You should represent the people before God, and carry their concerns to Him. Teach them God's requirements and *pass on His* laws. Show them the right way to live and the kind of work they should be doing.

Bible Translations with an Excess of Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach

Now listen to me. I will advise you, and may the Lord be with you. [You] represent the people before God, and you shall bring the matters to God.

I will advise you, and may the Lord be with you: in [this] counsel. He [Jethro] said to him [Moses], "Go, consult the Lord [as to whether my advice is sound]." -[from Mechilta]

[You] represent the people before God: [as a] messenger and an intermediary between them and the Omnipresent, and one who inquires of Him concerning the ordinances. — [from Onkelos]

the matters: The matters of their quarrels. — [from Jonathan]

NET Bible®

And you shall admonish them concerning the statutes and the teachings, and you shall make known to them the way they shall go and the deed[s] they shall do.

Now listen to me,³⁵ I will give you advice, and may God be with you: You be a representative for the people to God,³⁶ and you bring³⁷ their disputes³⁸ to God; warn³⁹ them of the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they must walk⁴⁰ and the work they must do.⁴¹

^{35tn} Heb "hear my voice."

^{36tn} The line reads "Be you to the people before God." He is to be their representative before God. This is introducing the aspect of the work that only Moses could do, what he has been doing. He is to be before God for the people, to pray for them, to appeal on their behalf. Jethro is essentially saying, I understand that you cannot delegate this to anyone else, so continue doing it (U. Cassuto, Exodus, 219-20).

^{37tn} The form is the perfect tense with the vav (י) consecutive; following the imperative it will be instruction as well. Since the imperative preceding this had the idea of "continue to be" as you are, this too has that force.

^{38tn} Heb "words"; KJV, ASV "the causes"; NRSV "cases"; NLT "questions."

^{39tn} The perfect tense with the vav (י) continues the sequence of instruction for Moses. He alone was to be the mediator, to guide them in the religious and moral instruction.

^{40tn} The verb and its following prepositional phrase form a relative clause, modifying "the way." The imperfect tense should be given the nuance of obligatory imperfect – it is the way they must walk.

^{41tn} This last part is parallel to the preceding: "work" is also a direct object of the verb "make known," and the relative clause that qualifies it also uses an obligatory imperfect.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...now, hear my voice, I will give you advice, and "**Elohiym** ^{Powers}" will exist with you, you will exist (for) the people, (in place) of "**Elohiym** ^{Powers}", and you will [bring] the (matters) to the "**Elohiym** ^{Powers}", and you will warn them of the customs and the teachings, and you will make them know the road they will walk in and the work which they must do,...

C. Thompson (updated) OT Now therefore listen to me and I will advise you; and God be with you. Be you to the people as the Oracle of God; and lay their cases before God; and testify to them the statutes of God and his law; and point out to them the ways in which they will walk, and the works which they will do:...

English Standard Version Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God, and you shall warn them about

Modern Literal Version	the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do.
New American Standard B.	Listen now to my voice. I will give you counsel and God be with you. Be you for the people toward God and bring you the cases to God. And you will teach them the statutes and the laws and will show them the way in which they must walk and the work that they must do.
New King James Version	Now listen to ^[o] me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you. ^[p] You be the people's representative before God, and you bring the ^[q] disputes to God, then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do.
Young's Updated LT	<p>^[o] Exodus 18:19 Lit <i>my voice</i></p> <p>^[p] Exodus 18:19 Lit <i>You be for the people in front of God</i></p> <p>^[q] Exodus 18:19 Lit <i>matters</i></p> <p>Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel [<i>advice</i>], and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. 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.</p> <p>"Now, hearken to my voice, I counsel you, and God is with you: be you for the people over-against God, and you have brought in the things unto God; and you have warned them concerning the statutes and the laws, and have made known to them the way in which they go, and the work which they do.</p>

The gist of this passage: Jethro says that Moses can continue deciding cases and bringing the statutes and laws of God before the people. However, he is going to offer some advice.

19-20

Exodus 18:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿattâh (עַתָּה) [pronounced <i>ġaht-TAWH</i>]	<i>now, at this time, already</i>	adverb of time	Strong's #6258 BDB #773
shâmaʿ (שָׁמַע) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHG</i>]	<i>listen [intently], listen up, pay attention; hear [me, my words], listen and obey, [or, listen and act upon, give heed to, take note of], hearken to, be attentive to, listen and be cognizant of</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
qôwl (קוֹל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
yâʿats (יָצַט) [pronounced <i>yaw-ĠAHTS</i>]	<i>to advise, to counsel; to take counsel; to decree; to consult for [anyone], to provide for; to predict, to declare future thing</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3289 BDB #419

This is the first occurrence of this word in the Bible.

Exodus 18:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>For some reason, both Owen and the NASB¹⁴ both translate the 1st person, singular Qal imperfect, 2nd person masculine suffix of yâ'ats (אָץ) [pronounced yaw-<i>GAHTS</i>] as <i>I will give you counsel</i> and it simply means <i>counsel, advise</i>. <i>The Emphasized Bible (modernized)</i> (<i>Now, you listen to my voice—let me counsel you, and may God be with you: you be for the people, in front of God, so will you bring the matters unto God;...</i>) gets it right, as does <i>The Amplified Bible</i>. You would think when you could translate one word for one word that translators would jump at that chance. Apparently, that is not always the case.</p>			

Translation: *Now, hear my voice [and] I will advise you,...*

Whereas, I don't believe that I had trouble with understanding what Jethro is saying, there are some problems in the Hebrew. Now, I attribute this to Jethro's difficulty with the language.

He asks Moses' indulgence, that he might offer some valuable advice.

Exodus 18:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect; apocopated	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Translation: *...for [lit., and] Elohim is with you.*

Jethro even claims that, what he is about to suggest, God will be on board for it.

Exodus 18:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>be, become; make, do</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

¹⁴ And the RSV, the NRSV and the KJV

Exodus 18:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾattâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	you (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by; on account of; about, concerning</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
mûwl (לִּוּם) [pronounced mool]	<i>in front of, opposite</i>	preposition	Strong's #4136 BDB #557
ʾĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: [This is what] you will do for the people before Elohim:...

Jethro has an idea as to how Moses might better give justice to the people, and save himself from being overworked.

Jethro has thought this out a great deal and he has a five-part plan. He states Moses' place as a priest to God—that is, Moses represents the people before God and he brings their cases before God. This does not mean that he prays to God about every single minor problem—Moses operates under his own wisdom and on a rare occasion, the difficult cases might be brought directly to God (at this point, we do not know any of the details about any case decided by Moses).

Exodus 18:19d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bôw' (בֹּא) [pronounced boh]	<i>take in, bring [near, against, upon], come in with, carry, cause to come [in], gather, bring to pass</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #935 BDB #97
ʾattâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	you (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61

Exodus 18:19d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
dʿbârîym (דְּבָרִים) [pronounced daw ^b -vawr-EEM]	<i>words, sayings, doctrines, commands; things, matters, affairs; reports</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʾĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: ...you will bring near [their] disputes before Elohim;...

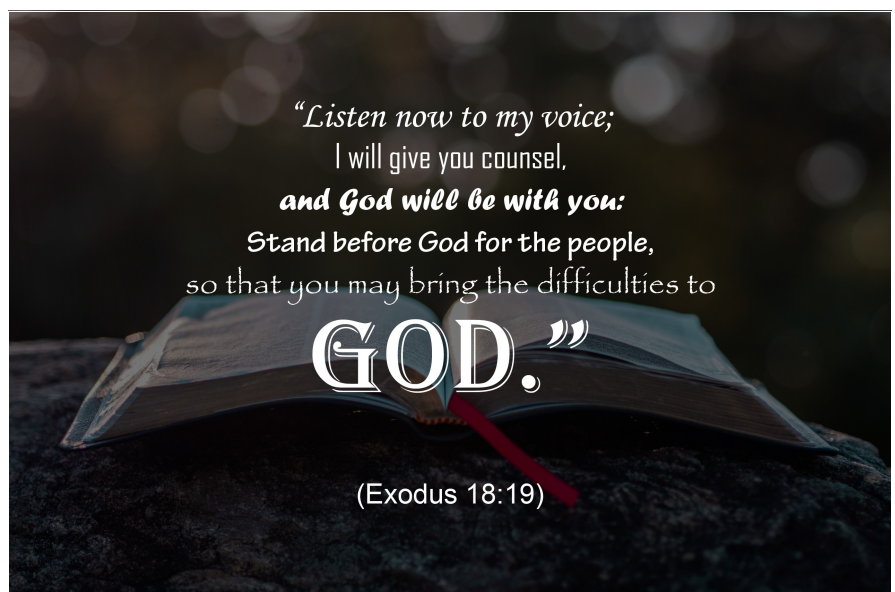
Jethro is not saying, “Let’s just stop hearing all of these disputes.” He tells Moses to continue bringing the disputes near to God (by bring a dispute to Moses, the people were bringing that dispute to God).

Exodus 18:19 *Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God.* (NKJV)

Bear in mind, after watching for a day, Jethro is telling Moses that he is doing it wrong; and Moses, the ruler of two million people, is listening carefully to his father-in-law. Jethro is saying this in a tactful way, but Moses is a brilliant man. He understands what is being said to him.

Let me suggest that Moses is listening for two reasons: (1) he is truly humble (grace oriented) and (2) he has listened to his father-in-law before, on many occasions; and it has benefitted him.

Exodus 18:19 (a graphic); from [i-bible.com](https://www.bible.com); accessed July 19, 2023.



Exodus 18:20a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
zâchar (זָכַר) [pronounced <i>zaw-KHAHR</i>]	<i>to enlighten, to admonish, to instruct, to teach, to be warned, to give a warning</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #2094 BDB #264
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>them; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to them, toward them</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
chuqqîym (חֻקִּים) [pronounced <i>khook-KEEM</i>]	<i>decrees, those things which are decreed; statutes; boundaries, defined limitations; appointed portions of labor, tasks</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #2706 BDB #349
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
tôwrôwth (תּוֹרוֹת) [pronounced <i>TOE-rowth</i>]	<i>instructions, doctrines; [human and divine] laws, directions, regulations, protocol; customs; transliterated Torah</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #8451 and #8452 BDB #435

Translation: ...and you will teach them the statutes and the laws.

The first thing that Moses needs to do is present to the people his understanding of God's statutes and laws.

Jethro does not know what is about to take place. He is not aware that Moses will receive what we know as the Mosaic Law from God. Moses also does not know that this is about to happen.

What Jethro is suggesting is, If Moses writes the statutes and the laws, and if Moses is subject to God, then these would be God's statutes and laws.

Exodus 18:19–20a Now, hear my voice [and] I will advise you, for [lit., and] Elohim is with you. [This is what] you will do for the people before Elohim: you will bring near [their] disputes before Elohim; and you will teach them the statutes and the laws. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 18:20b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâda' (יָדָעַ) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHḡ</i>]	<i>to cause to know, to make one know, to instruct, to teach; to show, to reveal</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
derek ^e (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced <i>DEH-rek^e</i>]	<i>way, distance, road, path; journey, course; direction, towards; manner, habit, way [of life]; of moral character</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1870 BDB #202
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88

Translation: *And you will make known to them they way in which they should walk;...*

Moses also needs to teach the people how to conduct themselves day-to-day. Moses needs to teach these various standards to the people so that they can learn to regulate themselves.

Jethro is saying, "We need standards; we need a set of social boundaries."

There is something extremely important alluded to here and in many previous passages which I have not yet covered. There are absolutes in this life; there are things which are right and wrong and these are the statutes and laws of God. We hope in our judicial system to mirror those statutes and laws. It does not matter that God has not delivered to the Hebrews the Law yet. This does not mean that it doesn't exist nor does this mean that there is no right and wrong yet. **For the Gentiles, who do not have the Law, do instinctively those things from the Law. These [Gentiles], not having the Law, are a law unto themselves in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them** (Romans 2:14–15).

Parts one and two of Jethro's plan: Moses needs to record God's system of laws and precepts and then make these things known to the people.

Jethro is saying, "You need to have clear laws and statutes and you must make certain that the people all know these laws and statutes."

Exodus 18:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ma'ăseh (מַעֲשֶׂה) [pronounced <i>mah-ġa-SEH</i>]	<i>deed, act, action, work, production, that which is done; that which is produced [property, goods, crops]; that which anyone makes or does; a course of action; a business</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4639 BDB #795
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>ġaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to produce, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

Translation: ...and they will do the work [which you have been doing].

Moses needs to lay out what is expected of the people. When they understand what is required from them, they will be doing much of Moses' work by regulating themselves.

Exodus 18:20b-c **And you will make known to them they way in which they should walk; and they will do the work [which you have been doing].** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

All of this is taking place prior to the giving of the Law (Moses and Jethro do not realize that this is on their calendar). However, what Moses determines will be the laws of God—so says Jethro. That may sound like an odd thing to say, but rulers were thought to be one step away from God.

Let's view another translation of v. 20:

Exodus 18:20 **Enlighten them as to the statutes and the laws, and show them the way by which they must walk and the work they must do.** (Tree of Life Version)

Jethro, with these words, may have inadvertently exposed another flaw in Israel's present judicial system. Jethro and Moses will both concentrate on the system of judges in vv. 21–26, but they will bypass a very important piece of the puzzle—the legislative piece. Where are the laws presently coming from? Moses' own understanding of Egyptian law as modified by his relationship with God. These things have not been written down, exactly, although they may exist at this time as the precedence set by case law (that is, each decision that Moses makes establishes a precedence in the law).

Essentially what Israel has at this point in time are all of the cases which Moses has determined the proper judicial outcome. A record of these cases—clearly not preserved in Scripture—is essentially Israel's law. I say this, but quickly point out, Israel as a nation, has existed for approximately three months time (Exodus 19:1). Therefore, whatever law exists is pretty much what Moses has in his own soul.

Inadvertently, Jethro has set us up for the next two chapters and beyond. Moses does not just need a better system of judges; he needs a system of laws. God will deliver these laws beginning with Exodus 20. I say these things by way of a preview of coming attractions.

Let's return to the narrative at hand:

Exodus 18:19–20 Now, hear my voice [and] I will advise you, for [lit., and] Elohim is with you. [This is what] you will do for the people before Elohim: you will bring near [their] disputes before Elohim; and you will teach them the statutes and the laws. And you will make known to them the way in which they should walk; and they will do the work [which you have been doing]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 18:19–20 Please hear my voice, son-in-law, and take my advice. Clearly, God is with you. Let me suggest how you should deal with the people before God. Teach them all God's statutes and His laws; and make them know the way in which they should walk. Then they can do much of the work that you have been doing. (Kukis paraphrase)

V. 21 is part Three in Jethro's plan: find responsible men of integrity that can be entrusted with responsibility.

What is being taught here is the delegation of authority. The person in charge should not try to do it all. That is a mistake that potentially leads to an early grave. Moses has to become more circumspect about his time and energy.

And you will chose from all the people men of strength, those fearing Elohim, men of truth, haters of bribery; and you have placed [them] over them—princes of thousands, princes of hundreds, princes of fifties, and princes of tens. And they have judged the people in every time. And he was, all the word the great they will bring to you; and all the word the small, they, [even] they, will judge. And is lighten from upon you and they have borne [the burden] with you.

Exodus
18:21–22

You will choose from all the people men of authority, those who fear Elohim, men of truth, haters of bribery [and greed]; and you will place [them] over the people [lit., *them*]. [There will be] officials of thousands, officials of hundreds, officials of fifties, and officials of tens. They will judge the people all of the time. And it will be, [for] every important matter, they will bring [that] to you; but for minor matters, they themselves will judge [those]. [This will] lighten from upon you [the heavy load of cases]; they will bear [this burden] with you.

You must first select from the people men with authority, those who fear God, men of truth, those who hate bribery and greed. You will place them into organized systems of authority, officials over a thousand, officials over a hundred, officials over fifty and officials over ten. So, once this is all organized, then extremely important matters will still be brought to you; but the less significant matters they will judge themselves. This will lighten your case load as they will bear much of this burden with you.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And you will chose from all the people men of strength, those fearing Elohim, men of truth, haters of bribery; and you have placed [them] over them—princes of thousands, princes of hundreds, princes of fifties, and princes of tens. And they have judged the people in every time. And he was, all the word the great they will bring to you; and all the word the small, they, [even] they, will judge. And is lighten from upon you and they have borne [the burden] with you.

Dead Sea Scrolls
Targum (Onkelos)

And thou, look out from the whole people men of ability who fear the Lord, men of truth who abhor to take mammon; and superappoint them chiefs of thousands, and chiefs of hundreds, and chiefs of fifties, and chiefs of tens. And they shall judge the people at any time, and every great matter they shall bring to thee, but every small thing they shall judge; and they will lighten it from thee, and bear it with thee.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

But thou shouldst elect from all the people men of ability who fear the Lord, upright men who hate to receive the mammon of dishonesty, and superappoint them to be heads of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. And let them judge the people at all times, and every great matter bring to thee, but every little thing let them judge themselves, that they may lighten the burden that is upon thee, and bear it with thee.

Revised Douay-Rheims

And provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, in whom there is truth, and that hate avarice, and appoint of them rulers of thousands, and of hundreds, and of fifties, and of tens. Who may judge the people at all times: and when any great matter soever shall fall out, let them refer it to you, and let them judge the lesser matters only: that so it may be lighter for you, the burden being shared out unto others.

Aramaic ESV of Peshitta

Moreover you shall 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. Let them judge the people at all times. It shall be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they shall judge themselves. So shall it be easier for you, and they shall share the load with you.

Peshitta (Syriac)

Moreover you shall provide out of all the people able men who fear God, truthful men who hate bribes and deceit; and appoint such over them to be officers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. Let them judge the people at all times; and when they have an important matter, let them come to you; but every small matter they shall judge for themselves; so it shall be easier for you, and they shall bear the burden with you.

Updated Brenton (Greek)

And do thou look out for thyself out of all the people able men, fearing God, righteous men, hating pride, and thou shalt set over the people captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, and captains of fifties, and captains of tens. And they shall judge the people at all times, and the too burdensome matter they shall bring to thee, but they shall judge the smaller cases; so they shall relieve thee and help thee.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English

But for the rest, take from among the people able men, such as have the fear of God, true men hating profits wrongly made; and put such men over them, to be captains of thousands, captains of hundreds and of fifties and of tens; And let them be judges in the causes of the people at all times: and let them put before you all important questions, but in small things let them give decisions themselves: in this way, it will be less hard for you, and they will take the weight off you.

Easy English

But you must choose wise men from all the people. They must be men who obey God. They must be good men, who will not do false things. Make these men officers over groups of the people. Some groups will be 1000 people; some groups will be 100 people. Some groups will be 50 people and some will be only 10 people. Let them work as judges for the people, every day. They can decide the small problems, but they must bring the difficult problems to you. That will make your work easier, because they will work with you.

Easy-to-Read Version—2006	“Choose good men you can trust—men who respect God. Choose men who will not change their decisions for money. Make these men rulers over the people. There should be rulers over 1000 people, 100 people, 50 people, and even over ten people. Let these rulers judge the people. If there is a very important case, then they can come to you and let you decide what to do. But they can decide the other cases themselves. In this way these men will share your work with you, and it will be easier for you to lead the people.
Good News Bible (TEV)	But in addition, you should choose some capable men and appoint them as leaders of the people: leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. They must be God-fearing men who can be trusted and who cannot be bribed. Let them serve as judges for the people on a permanent basis. They can bring all the difficult cases to you, but they themselves can decide all the smaller disputes. That will make it easier for you, as they share your burden.
<i>The Message</i>	And then you need to keep a sharp eye out for competent men—men who fear God, men of integrity, men who are incorruptible—and appoint them as leaders over groups organized by the thousand, by the hundred, by fifty, and by ten. They'll be responsible for the everyday work of judging among the people. They'll bring the hard cases to you, but in the routine cases they'll be the judges. They will share your load and that will make it easier for you.
Names of God Bible	“But choose capable men from all the people, men who fear Elohim , men you can trust, men who hate corruption. Put them in charge of groups of 1,000, or 100, or 50, or 10 people. Let them be the ones who usually settle disagreements among the people. They should bring all important cases to you, but they should settle all minor cases themselves. Make it easier for yourself by letting them help you..
NIRV	But choose men of ability from all the people. They must have respect for God. You must be able to trust them. They must not try to get money by cheating others. Appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Let them serve the people as judges. But have them bring every hard case to you. They can decide the easy ones themselves. That will make your load lighter. They will share it with you.
New Simplified Bible	»You should choose capable men from all the people. Find men who respect God. These must be men you can trust who hate corruption. Put them in charge of groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. »They must be the ones who usually settle disagreements among the people. They should bring all-important cases to you. But they should settle all minor cases themselves. Make it easier for yourself by letting them help you.

Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	You will need to appoint some competent leaders who respect God and are trustworthy and honest. Then put them over groups of ten, fifty, a hundred, and a thousand. These judges can handle the ordinary cases and bring the more difficult ones to you. Having them to share the load will make your work easier.
The Living Bible	“Find some capable, godly, honest men who hate bribes, and appoint them as judges, one judge for each 1000 people; he in turn will have ten judges under him, each in charge of a hundred; and under each of them will be two judges, each responsible for the affairs of fifty people; and each of these will have five judges beneath him, each counseling ten persons. Let these men be responsible to serve the people with justice at all times. Anything that is too important or complicated can be brought to you. But the smaller matters they can take care of themselves. That way it will be easier for you because you will share the burden with them.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	Also, you should choose from the people able men who fear God, men of truth who hate to get things by doing wrong. Have these men rule over the people, as leaders

New Living Translation	<p>of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. Let them judge the people at all times. Have all the big troubles brought to you. But have them judge the small troubles. So it will be easier for you. They will share the work with you.</p> <p>But select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders over groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. They should always be available to solve the people's common disputes, but have them bring the major cases to you. Let the leaders decide the smaller matters themselves. They will help you carry the load, making the task easier for you.</p>
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	<p>In addition, you should choose some other men to help you. Choose men who have respect for God and who will not accept bribes. Appoint some of them to make decisions for groups of ten people, some for groups of fifty people, some for groups of a hundred people, and some for groups of a thousand people. Allow them to serve to settle disputes for the people. The difficult matters they can bring to you, but the matters that are not difficult, they can decide themselves. That will make the work easier for you as they help you do that work.</p>

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	<p>But keep an eye out among the people for capable, righteous men who fear God... righteous men who hate pride. Then appoint them as chiefs over thousands, chiefs over hundreds, chiefs over fifties, and chiefs over tens... let them spend all their time judging. And whenever a problem is too great, then they should bring it to you. Let them help you to free up your [time] by judging the smaller cases.</p>
Beck's American Translation Common English Bible	<p>But you should also look among all the people for capable persons who respect God. They should be trustworthy and not corrupt. Set these persons over the people as officers of groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. Let them sit as judges for the people at all times. They should bring every major dispute to you, but they should decide all of the minor cases themselves. This will be much easier for you, and they will share your load.</p>
New Advent (Knox) Bible	<p>Meanwhile, choose out here and there among the people able men, God-fearing, lovers of truth and haters of gain ill won; put each of these in charge of a tribe, or of a hundred families, or fifty families, or ten.[2] These will administer justice to the people from day to day, referring graver matters to thee, but deciding for themselves all that is of less moment. Share thy burden with others, and find relief;...</p>
Translation for Translators	<p>[2] The word 'families' is not expressed in the original, but this seems the most probable account of what is meant.</p> <p>But in addition, you should choose some <i>other men to help you</i>. Choose men who have reverence for God and who will not accept bribes. Appoint some of them to make decisions <i>for groups of</i> ten people, some <i>for groups of</i> fifty people, some <i>for groups of</i> a hundred people, and some <i>for groups of</i> a thousand people. Allow them to serve permanently to settle disputes for the people. The difficult matters the people can bring to you; but the matters that are not difficult, they can decide themselves. That will make the work easier for you, as they help you do that work.</p>

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia Translation	<p>And then surely you can perceive among your people men of ability, God-fearing men, men of truth, who hate dishonest gain. Place men like these over them, to be chiefs of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties, and chiefs of tens. Let these men judge the people in every season. Then they can bring every important</p>
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	case to you, but judge every minor case themselves. This will lighten your load, and they will carry the load with you."
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Also choose for yourself, from all the People, strong men, who fear GOD and hate bribes, and place over them as chiefs of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties and chiefs of tens,—and let them judge the People at all times, and let only all the great affairs be brought to you, but let them judge all the little matters, and thus ease your- self,—for they load you.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	Moreover seek out among all the people, men of activity which fear God, and men that are true and hate covetousness: and make them heads over the people, captains over thousands, over hundreds, over fifty, and over ten. And let them judge the people at all seasons: If there be any great matter, let them bring that unto you, and let them judge all small causes themselves, and ease your self, and let them bear with you.
Unlocked Literal Bible	Furthermore, you must choose capable men from all the people, men who honor God, men of truth who hate unjust gain. You must put them over people, to be leaders in charge of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and of tens. They will judge the people in all routine cases, but the difficult cases they will bring to you. As for all the small cases, they can judge those themselves. In that way it will be easier for you, and they will carry the burden with you.
Urim-Thummim Version	Furthermore you will provide out of all the people able men, such as fear Elohim, men of truth hating unjust gain, and place such people over them to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens. And let them govern the people in all seasons and it will be when every great matter comes up they will bring it to you, but every small matter they will judge, so it will be easier for yourself and they will bear the burden with you.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And you will gather from the people men of arms who fear God, men of truth, who hate graft, and put upon them managers of thousands, managers of hundreds, managers of fifties, and managers of tens. And they will judge the people at all times, and it will be that every big thing they will bring to you, and all the little things they will judge themselves, and lighten your load, and they will carry it with you.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	But choose among the people, capable, God-fearing men, men of truth who hate a bribe, and appoint them as leaders for groups of a thousand, a hundred, fifty and ten. They will administer justice at all times, bringing to your attention only those cases of major importance, while they deal with all those of lesser importance. That will ease your burden since they will be sharing it with you.
The Heritage Bible	And you shall look out from all the people by divine vision men of resources who fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain; and put them as chief rulers of thousands, chief rulers of hundreds, chief rulers of fifties, and chief rulers of tens; And let them judge the people at all times; and it shall be, every great word they shall bring to you, and every small word they shall judge; and it shall be made light for yourself, and they shall lift with you.
New American Bible (2002)	But you should also look among all the people for able and God-fearing men, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain, and set them as officers over groups of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. Let these men render decisions for the people in all ordinary cases. More important cases they should refer to you, but all the lesser cases they can settle themselves. Thus, your burden will be lightened, since they will bear it with you.
New American Bible (2011)	But you should also look among all the people for able and God-fearing men, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain, and set them over the people as commanders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. [Dt 1:15; 16:18.] Let these render decisions for the people in all routine cases. Every important case they

should refer to you, but every lesser case they can settle themselves. Lighten your burden by letting them bear it with you!.

New English Bible—1970 But you must yourself search for capable, God-fearing men among all the people, honest and incorruptible men, and appoint them over the people as officers over units of a thousand, of a hundred, of fifty or of ten. They shall sit as a permanent court for the people; they must refer difficult cases to you but decide simple cases themselves. In this way your burden will be lightened, and they will share it with you.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible But you should choose from among all the people competent men who are God-fearing, honest and incorruptible to be their leaders, in charge of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Normally, they will settle the people's disputes. They should bring you the difficult cases; but ordinary matters they should decide themselves. In this way, they will make it easier for you and share the load with you.

The Scriptures 1998 "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.

"And they shall rightly rule the people at all times. And it shall be that they bring every great matter to you, but they themselves rightly rule every small matter. So, make it lighter for yourself, for they shall bear with you.

Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible AND SEEK OUT FOR YOURSELF OUT OF ALL THE PEOPLE, ABLE MEN, FEARING THE THEOS (*Alpha & Omega*), RIGHTEOUS MEN, HATING PRIDE, AND YOU SHALL SET OVER THE PEOPLE CAPTAINS OF THOUSANDS AND CAPTAINS OF HUNDREDS, AND CAPTAINS OF FIFTIES, AND CAPTAINS OF TENS. AND THEY SHALL JUDGE THE PEOPLE AT ALL TIMES. AND THE MAJOR MATTERS THEY SHALL BRING TO YOU, BUT THEY SHALL JUDGE THE SMALLER CASES; SO THEY SHALL RELIEVE YOU AND HELP YOU.

Awful Scroll Bible You was to provide out of the people, men of ability, revering he of mighty ones, men of credit, hating undercuts. You is to have set them over as chiefs of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties, and chiefs of tens. They are to have given judgment for the people. At the occurrence of a great concern, they were to bring it to you, and the small concern were they to give judgment. Be making it lighter, even are they to have borne it with you.

Concordant Literal Version Now you shall perceive among all the people men of ability, fearful of Elohim, men of truth, hating gain. You will place these over them as chiefs of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties and chiefs of tens. And they will judge the people in every season. Yet it will be that every great matter of dispute they shall bring to you, and every small matter shall they judge themselves. Lighten yourself from what is on you, and they will bear it with you.

exeGeses companion Bible ...and you - seek valiant men from all the people
such as awe Elohim, men of truth, hating greed;
and over them
set governors of thousands, governors of hundreds,
governors of fifties and governors of tens:
and have them judge the people at all times:
and so be it,
that they bring you every great word;
but every small word they judge:
and thus lightens yourself
and they bear with you.

Orthodox Jewish Bible	Moreover thou shalt provide out of kol HaAm anshei chayil (able men), yirei Elohim, anshei emes, hating bribes; and place such over them, to be over thousands, and over hundreds, over fifties, and over tens; And let them judge HaAm at all times; and it shall be, that every davar hagadol they shall bring unto thee, but every davar hakaton they shall judge; so shall it be eased for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee.
Rotherham's <i>Emphasized B.</i>	Thou thyself, therefore shalt look out, from among all the people—men of ability, reverers of God, men of fidelity, haters of extortion,—and place them over them as rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. So shall they judge the people at any time, and it shall be, all the great matters, shall they bring in unto thee, but all the small matters, shall, they themselves, judge,—so, lighten thou the burden for thyself, and let them bear it with thee.
Third Millennium Bible	Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God -- men of truth, hating covetousness -- and place such over them to be rulers of thousands and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens. 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. So shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Furthermore, you shall select from all the people competent men who [reverently] fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; you shall place these over the people as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. They shall judge the people at all times; have them bring every major dispute to you, but let them judge every minor dispute themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear <i>the burden</i> with you.
The Expanded Bible	But choose some ·capable [virtuous; noble] men from among the people—men who ·respect [fear] God [Prov. 1:7], who can be trusted, and who ·will not change their decisions for money [^L hate dishonest profit]. Make these men officers over the people, to rule over groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. Let these officers ·solve the disagreements [consider cases; judge] among the people all the time. They can bring the ·hard [^L big] cases to you, but they can ·decide [judge] the ·simple [^L small] cases themselves. That will make it easier for you, because they will share the work with you.
Kretzmann's Commentary	Moreover, thou shalt provide, look for, select, out of all the people able men, men of strength of body and men of energy, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, distinguished for their lack of selfishness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens, the decimal system probably being taken since ten represented the average size of a family. And let them judge the people at all seasons, according to the degree of importance and difficulty; and it shall be that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, such as were too difficult for them to decide, but every small matter they shall judge; so shall it be easier for thyself, he would relieve himself of some of the burden resting upon him, and they shall bear the burden with thee, assist Moses in the business of having charge of such a great people.
Syndein/Thieme	{Principle of Delegation of Authority} Moreover you shall provide out of all the people able men, such as fear 'Elohim/Godhead, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all seasons and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto you, but every small matter they shall judge. So shall it be easier for yourself, and they shall bear the burden with you.

The Voice

As for all these other duties you have taken on, choose competent leaders who fear God, love truth, despise dishonesty, and won't take bribes. After you divide and subdivide all the people into various groups of a thousand, hundred, fifty, and ten, put the men of integrity you selected in charge over the various groups. Let these righteous leaders be ready to judge the people whenever it is necessary. If there is some major problem, they can bring that to you. Otherwise, these select leaders ought to be able to handle the minor problems. This will be much easier for you, and they will help you carry this burden.

Jethro is more than Moses' father-in-law; he is also an insightful leader and a skilled counselor. He sees that what Moses is trying to do is counterproductive. Moses is wearing himself down in continual service to the people, and the people are frustrated with the many hours they must wait to have their cases heard by a single arbitrator. Jethro's counsel advances the best possible solution for all concerned. Moses remains the sole spiritual leader of the emerging nation, the people's representative to God, and the conduit of God's wisdom to the people. But now he is to delegate his governing authority to a set of judges.

The legal and administrative system Jethro proposes is much like a military command with the masses of people divided and then subdivided. Those who are honest and capable hear the normal disputes that arise on a daily basis, much as they have observed Moses handling them in the past. The more difficult and unique issues are still dealt with by Moses. In this system, there is no difference between civil disputes and religious inquiries. This is an administration designed to handle all problems, secular or spiritual. Life, after all, doesn't fall into nice, neat categories.

For some reason, this note is placed with Exodus 19:3 [here](#).

Bible Translations with an Excess of Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach

But you shall choose out of the entire nation men of substance, God fearers, men of truth, who hate monetary gain, and you shall appoint over them [Israel] leaders over thousands, leaders over hundreds, leaders over fifties, and leaders over tens.

But you shall choose: with the holy spirit that is upon you. — [from Mechilta]

men of substance: Heb. לִי־חַיִּים שְׂנֵאָה, wealthy men, who do not have to flatter or show favoritism. — [from Mechilta] [

men of truth: These are people who keep their promises, upon whose words one may rely, and thereby, their commands will be obeyed. — [from Mechilta]

who hate monetary gain: Who hate [to have] their own property in litigation, like [the Talmudic adage] that we say: Any judge from whom money is exacted through litigation is not [fit to be] a judge. — [based on Mechilta and B.B. 58b]

leaders over thousands: They were six hundred officers for six hundred thousand [men]. — [from Mechilta, Sanh. 18a]

leaders over hundreds: They were six thousand. — [from Mechilta, Sanh. 18a]

leaders over fifties: Twelve thousand. — [from Mechilta, Sanh. 18a]

and leaders over tens: Sixty thousand. — [from Mechilta, Sanh. 18a] [Rashi lists the number of each category of judges, which appears to be superfluous, because the Torah should start with the lowest denomination and ascend to the highest instead of starting with the highest and descending to the lowest. Rashi answers that it starts with the highest officers because they are the lowest number.]

And they shall judge the people at all times, and it shall be that any major matter they shall bring to you, and they themselves shall judge every minor matter, thereby making it easier for you, and they shall bear [the burden] with you.

And they shall judge: Heb. וְנִשְׁפְּטוּ: [Onkelos renders:] וְנִשְׁפָּטוּ, an imperative expression.]

thereby making it easier for you: Heb. לְקָהוּ. This thing [i.e., this arrangement will serve] to make it easier for you. לְקָהוּ is like דִּבְכָּה in “he hardened (דִּבְכָּהוּ) his heart” (Exod. 8: 11) [lit., making heavy his heart]; “and slew (תוֹכָהוּ) the Moabites” (II Kings 3:24) [lit., and slaying the Moabites], a present tense.

Kaplan Translation

'But you must [also] seek out from among all the people **capable**, God-fearing men - men of truth, who hate **injustice**. You must then appoint them over [the people] as **leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens**. 'Let them administer justice for the people **on a regular basis**. Of course, they will have to bring every major case to you, but they can judge the minor cases by themselves. They will then share the burden, making things easier for you.

capable

Chayal in Hebrew. See Genesis 47:6, 1 Kings 1:42, Proverbs 12:4, 31:10, Ruth 3:11. Or, 'competent,' or 'resourceful' (Hirsch). Alternatively, 'men with leadership qualities' (Ramban), 'efficient men' (Ramban), 'strong men' (Ibn Janach); 'stronghearted' or 'confident men' (Tanchuma 2; Ralbag); 'men with initiative' (Divrey Sh'lomo; MeAm Lo'ez); 'men of status' (Rashbam), or, 'wealthy men,' (Mekhilta; Rashi; Sekhel Tov; cf. Genesis 34:29, Isaiah 8:4, 30:6, Jeremiah 16:3). Or, 'superior men,' implying self-control, moral superiority and leadership (Yad, Sanhedrin 2:7).

injustice

Betza in Hebrew. Cf. Ezekiel 22:12; Judges 5:19, Micah 4:13. Or, 'robbery' (Ramban; Bachya; MeAm Lo'ez); 'Improper gain' (Rashbam), or 'gain' (Rashi, Ibn Ezra). There is actually a Talmudic dispute regarding the last two explanations (Kethuboth 105b; Mekhilta).

leaders...

Cf. Deuteronomy 1:15.

on a regular basis

Literally, 'at all times.' Or, 'on a permanent basis.'

But you choose⁴² from the people capable men,⁴³ God-fearing,⁴⁴ men of truth,⁴⁵ those who hate bribes,⁴⁶ and put them over the people⁴⁷ as rulers⁴⁸ of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. They will judge⁴⁹ the people under normal circumstances,⁵⁰ and every difficult case⁵¹ they will bring to you, but every small case⁵² they themselves will judge, so that⁵³ you may make it easier for yourself,⁵⁴ and they will bear the burden⁵⁵ with you.

⁴²tn The construction uses the independent pronoun for emphasis, and then the imperfect tense “see” (רָאָה, khazah) – “and you will see from all...” Both in Hebrew and Ugaritic expressions of “seeing” are used in the sense of choosing (Gen 41:33). See U. Cassuto, Exodus, 220.

⁴³tn The expression is אֲנָשֵׁי חַיִּיל (’anshe khayil, “capable men”). The attributive genitive is the word used in expressions like “mighty man of valor.” The word describes these men as respected, influential, powerful people, those looked up to by the community as leaders, and those who will have the needs of the community in mind.

⁴⁴tn The description “fearers of God” uses an objective genitive. It describes them as devout, worshipful, obedient servants of God.

^{45tn} The expression “men of truth” (אֲנָשֵׁי אֱמֶת, *’anshe ’emet*) indicates that these men must be seekers of truth, who know that the task of a judge is to give true judgment (U. Cassuto, Exodus, 220). The word “truth” includes the ideas of faithfulness or reliability, as well as factuality itself. It could be understood to mean “truthful men,” men whose word is reliable and true.

^{46tn} Heb “haters of bribes.” Here is another objective genitive, one that refers to unjust gain. To hate unjust gain is to reject and refuse it. Their decisions will not be swayed by greed.

^{47tn} Heb “over them”; the referent (the people) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

^{48sn} It is not clear how this structure would work in a judicial setting. The language of “captains of thousands,” etc., is used more for military ranks. There must have been more detailed instruction involved here, for each Israelite would have come under four leaders with this arrangement, and perhaps difficult cases would be sent to the next level. But since the task of these men would also involve instruction and guidance, the breakdown would be very useful. Deut 1:9, 13 suggest that the choice of these people was not simply Moses’ alone.

^{49tn} The form is the perfect tense with the vav (ו) consecutive, making it equivalent to the imperfect of instruction in the preceding verse.

^{50tn} Heb “in every time,” meaning “in all normal cases” or “under normal circumstances.” The same phrase occurs in v. 26.

^{51tn} Heb “great thing.”

^{52tn} Heb “thing.”

^{53tn} The vav here shows the result or the purpose of the instructions given.

^{54tn} The expression וְיִהְיֶה לְךָ קֶלֶקֶל (v’yhaqel me’aleykha) means literally “and make it light off yourself.” The word plays against the word for “heavy” used earlier – since it was a heavy or burdensome task, Moses must lighten the load.

^{55tn} Here “the burden” has been supplied.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans.	...and you, you will perceive (out of) all the people, men of force, fearful of " Elohiym Powers ", men of truth, hating profit, and you will place upon them nobles of thousands, nobles of hundreds, nobles of fifties and nobles of tens, and they will decide for the people <at all times>, and (it) will (come to pass), of all the great (matter)s they will [bring] to you, and of all the small (matter)s they will decide themselves, it will be made little upon you, and they will lift you up,...
C. Thompson (updated) OT	...but look out for yourself from among all the people, for able, pious men, men of integrity who hate pride; and set these over them as rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, and rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens; and let them administer justice to the people on all occasions: and the matter which is too high for them, they will lay before you; but causes easily determined they themselves will decide. Thus they will remove a burden from you and help you.
Context Group Version	Moreover you shall provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, spurning covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: and let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they shall judge themselves: so it shall be easier for yourself, and they shall carry [the burden] with you.
Modern English Version	Moreover, you shall choose out of all the people capable men who fear God, men of truth, hating dishonest gain, and place these men over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. Let them judge the people at all times, and let it be that every difficult matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they shall judge, so that it will be easier for you, and they will bear <i>the burden</i> with you.
New American Standard B.	Furthermore, you shall ^[r] select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, ^[s] of hundreds, ^[t] of fifties and ^[u] of tens. Let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major ^[v] dispute they will bring to you, but

every minor [w]dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear *the burden* with you.

[r] Exodus 18:21 Lit see

[s] Exodus 18:21 Lit leaders of

[t] Exodus 18:21 Lit leaders of

[u] Exodus 18:21 Lit leaders of

[v] Exodus 18:22 Lit matter

New European Version

Moreover you shall 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. Let them judge the people at all times. It shall be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they shall judge themselves. So shall it be easier for you, and they shall share the load with you.

Young's Updated LT

“And you—you will provide out of all the people men of ability, fearing God, men of truth, hating dishonest gain, and have placed these over them, heads of thousands, heads of hundreds, heads of fifties, and heads of tens, and they have judged the people at all times; and it has come to pass, every great matter they bring in unto you, and every small matter they judge themselves; and lighten it from off yourself, and they have borne with you.

The gist of this passage:

Jethro suggests that Moses appoint a number of judges under him to relieve him of the burden of his excessive responsibility.

21-22

Exodus 18:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced <i>aht-TAW</i>]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
châzâh (חַזֵּה) [pronounced <i>khaw-ZAW</i>]	<i>to see, to behold; to perceive (mentally); to contemplate; to have a vision of; to see [God], therefore, to enjoy His favor, to know Him; to choose</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2372 BDB #302
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

Literally, min kôl (כֹּל מִן) [pronounced *mihn-kohl*] means, *from all, from every*. However, together, various literal translations give the following renderings: *about all, of all* (1Sam. 23:23); *over all, more than all, above all* (Gen. 3:14).

Exodus 18:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'am (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
'ānāshîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced <i>uh-NAW-sheem</i>]; 'iyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced <i>ee-SHEEM</i>]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers; some of the men</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
chayil (חַיִל) [pronounced <i>CHAH-yil</i>]	<i>army, force; strength, courage, power, might; efficiency; ability and that which is gotten through strength—wealth, substance</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2428 BDB #298

Translation: You will choose from all the people men of authority,...

The verb used here is not what you would expect. It is the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *châzâh* (חָזַח) [pronounced *khaw-ZAW*], which means, *to see, to behold; to perceive (mentally); to contemplate; to have a vision of; to see [God]*, therefore, *to enjoy His favor, to know Him; to choose*. Strong's #2372 BDB #302. You will note that final meaning as being quite different from the others. So, I believe the idea here is *to contemplate, to have a vision of, to perceive* of what these men should be like. Moses determines in his own mind's eye first what he is looking for.

What Jethro is going to suggest is that Moses lighten his own load. He will need to consider the various men that he has led and choose a group of men from them who have natural authority. Some people can command such authority; some cannot.

Jethro is going to suggest four characteristics which Moses should look for in choosing men below him. These characteristics are good qualities to look for in a leader, even until today.

The key word here in the first phrase is *chayil* (חַיִל) [pronounced *CHAH-yil*] and it refers to strength and the many facets of strength. Therefore it is often translated as *strength, efficiency, army, wealth, virtue, valor*.

Exodus 18:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yârê' (יָרֵא) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAY</i>]	<i>those fearing, those who are afraid; ones who exhibit fear-respect, those who reverence [have a reverential respect]</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle; construct form	Strong's #3372 BDB #431

Owens has this as a Qal active participle; other sources list this as a masculine plural adjective.

Exodus 18:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâriʾ (אָרִי) [pronounced yaw-RIH]	<i>those fearing, the ones reverencing; who are feared, those who are fearful, the dreaded [dreadful] ones</i>	masculine plural adjective with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3373 (#3372) BDB #431
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: ...those who fear Elohim,...

Jethro says to choose men who fear God; so this is more than exercising faith in God; these are men who have some spiritual maturity. They think about God; they consider God; He is a part of their daily existence. This cannot be in some esoteric sense. They have to know the attributes of God; they have to have an understanding of the **essence of God**.

Exodus 18:21c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾānāshîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced uh-NAW-sheem]; ʾiyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced ee-SHEEM]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers; some of the men</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
ʾēmeth (אֱמֶת) [pronounced EH-meth]	<i>firmness, faithfulness, truth, certainty, stability, perpetuity, fidelity, reliable, stable, dependable</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #571 BDB #54

Translation: ...men of truth,...

Truth is the Hebrew word ʾēmeth (אֱמֶת) [pronounced EH-meth] and it means *faithfulness, truth, reliable, ethical*. They need to be truthful, reliable, ethical; and the truth has to be important to them.

These would be men who are dedicated to truth; they are interested in what is true; this is important to them.

Illustration: Few things are more important than the truth. One of the reasons that so many media sources are no longer trusted is, they no longer respect the truth. If they can back their favorite candidates by distorting the news in some way (or by not reporting some news), they do. They may think that they are being clever, but the public recognizes what they are doing. Currently, media news is one of the least-trusted sources of news; and people are often seeking out alternative places to find their news.

Illustration: Rush Limbaugh was once asked, "What is an honest, middle-of-the road news program that we can watch?" He did not have an answer for this. There was not a single news program or website that he could recommend.

Exodus 18:21d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
sânê' (שָׂנְאִים) [pronounced saw-NAY]	<i>haters, those who are at enmity, the ones despising; those who hate</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle	Strong's #8130 BDB #971
betsa' (בִּצְחָ) [pronounced BEH-tsaḥ]	<i>greed, materialism lust; bribery; unjust gain or profit [taken by bribery, violence, looting]; [enemies as] prey</i>	masculine singular noun; pausal form	Strong's #1215 BDB #130

Translation: ...haters of bribery [and greed];...

This is a two-word description. First is the masculine plural, Qal active participle of sâneh' (שָׂנְאִים) [pronounced saw-NAY], which means, *hating, despising*. Strong's #8130 BDB #971. What is hated is the masculine singular noun betsa' (בִּצְחָ) [pronounced BEH-tsaḥ], which means, *greed, materialism lust; bribery; unjust gain or profit [taken by bribery, violence, looting]; [enemies as] prey*. Strong's #1215 BDB #130.

These are men who hate bribery. They are men whose opinions cannot be bought.

Exodus 18:21e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wê (or vê) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
sîym (שִׁיַּם) [pronounced seem]; also spelled sûwm (שׁוּם) [pronounced soom]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
'al (עַל) [pronounced gah]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

Translation: ...and you will place [them] over the people [lit., them].

Their authority will be over the people; but given everything else, this means that they place the good of the people above their own personal gain. This is the true concept of public service—a politician is to be a public servant, working for the good of the people and he is not there to line his own pockets with gold.

These men will assume positions of authority; in this case, they will become judges.

Exodus 18:21f			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
sar (סַר) [pronounced sar]	chieftain, chief, ruler, official, captain, prince, leader, commander	masculine plural construct	Strong's #8269 BDB #978
ʾălâpîhîym (אַלְפִיִּים) [pronounced uh-law-FEEM]	thousands, families, [military] units	masculine plural noun	Strong's #505 (and #504) BDB #48
sar (סַר) [pronounced sar]	chieftain, chief, ruler, official, captain, prince, leader, commander	masculine plural construct	Strong's #8269 BDB #978
mê'ôwth (מֵאוֹת) [pronounced may-OHTH]	hundreds	feminine plural construct; numeral	Strong's #3967 BDB #547
sar (סַר) [pronounced sar]	chieftain, chief, ruler, official, captain, prince, leader, commander	masculine plural construct	Strong's #8269 BDB #978
chămishîym (חֲמִשִּׁים) [pronounced khuh-mih-SHEEM]	fifty, fifties	plural numeral	Strong's #2572 BDB #332
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
sar (סַר) [pronounced sar]	chieftain, chief, ruler, official, captain, prince, leader, commander	masculine plural construct	Strong's #8269 BDB #978
ʿasârâh (עֲשָׂרִים) [pronounced gah-saw-RAW]	ten	feminine plural numeral	Strong's #6235 BDB #796

Translation: [There will be] officials of thousands, officials of hundreds, officials of fifties, and officials of tens.

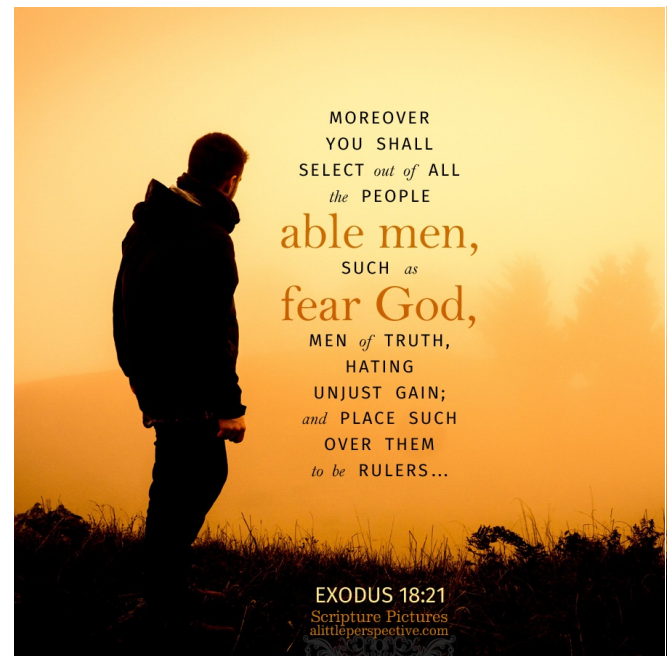
These men will be placed over various groups of men. I do not know exactly the structure of this, apart from it being an organized structure based upon authority. I would assume that these thousands, hundred, fifties and tens all refer to groups of people. The exact structure is difficult to ascertain, however.

Part four: not only are men of great character going to be chosen but they will be organized into a hierarchy of authority. I taught in a school system where there was a hierarchy of authority. These authorities occasionally changed from year to year—but there was undoubtedly one in place. When I had a problem, I did not go immediately to the superintendent of the school district; nor when a student had a problem, they did not immediately go to the head principal of the school. There was a hierarchy of authority. We have the exact same thing with our judicial system (which is primarily what Jethro is organizing). Right now, everyone with a problem is coming to Moses. That is wrong and inefficient.

Exodus 18:21 You will choose from all the people men of authority, those who fear Elohim, men of truth, haters of bribery [and greed]; and you will place [them] over the people [lit., *them*]. [There will be] officials of thousands, officials of hundreds, officials of fifties, and officials of tens. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The key is delegation. One way you know that an organization is well-run is, the vice presidents are smart, hard-working and organized. The organization is even more impressive if the vice presidents have integrity.

Exodus 18:21 (a graphic); from [A Little Perspective](#); accessed July 19, 2023.



Exodus 18:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâphaṭ (שָׁפַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-FAHT</i>]	<i>to judge, to condemn, to punish; to defend [especially the poor and oppressed], to defend [one's cause] and deliver him from his enemies; to rule, to govern</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #8199 BDB #1047
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'am (אָם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
kôl (כָּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

Literally, *in all*. Although I don't have this in the lexicons, it is rendered by the most literal translations as *among all, through all, throughout all, with all*.

Exodus 18:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘êth (תֵּעַ) [pronounced <i>gayth</i>]	<i>time, the right time, the time proper ; opportunity</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #6256 BDB #773

Translation: They will judge the people all of the time.

These men will be in charge of rendering judgment.

“You need to retire from being a full-time judge for every person,” Jethro tells him.

Exodus 18:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means *and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass* (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered *subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which*. Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).

kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAWR</i>]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command; business, occupation; case; something; manner</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced <i>gaw-DOHL</i>]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud; elder, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	masculine singular adjective with a definite article	Strong's #1419 BDB #152
bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to take in, to bring [near, against, upon], to come in with, to carry, to cause to come [in], to gather, to bring to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97

Exodus 18:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'el (לְ) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: And it will be, [for] every important matter, they will bring [that] to you;...

If it is an important or a very difficult matter, then that will be brought directly to Moses. Perhaps one which could not be decided, could be brought to Moses. So Moses would still have a function in the realm of judging.

Exodus 18:22c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced koh]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command; business, occupation; case; something; manner</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
qâṭân (קָטָן) [pronounced kaw-TAWN]	<i>small, young, unimportant, insignificant</i>	masculine singular adjective; with the definite article	Strong's #6996 BDB #881
shâphaṭ (שָׁפַט) [pronounced shaw-FAHT]	<i>to judge, to condemn, to punish; to defend [especially the poor and oppressed], to defend [one's cause] and deliver him from his enemies; to rule, to govern</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8199 BDB #1047
hêm (הֵם) [pronounced haym]	<i>they, those; themselves; these [with the definite article]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural personal pronoun; sometimes the verb to be is implied	Strong's #1992 BDB #241

Translation: ...but for minor matters, they themselves will judge [those].

However, for most matters—and people are very trivial when it comes to the courts—the judges which Moses appoints can handle those cases.

Bear in mind that Jethro has been in court all day long watching Moses, so he knows the caliber of disputes that are being brought before him.

Exodus 18:22d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
qâlal (קָלַל) [pronounced <i>kaw-LAL</i>]	<i>to be made light; to lighten; to be a minor (trivial) matter; to treat with contempt, to bring contempt or dishonor</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #7043 BDB #886
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahʼ</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752

Together, they mean *from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to, from*. Some translators rendered this *away from*. Some translate this *from above, above* in Gen. 49:25.

Translation: [This will] lighten from upon you [the heavy load of cases];...

This would lighten Moses' workload, because he was spending all of his time with these trivial cases, from morning til night.

Exodus 18:22e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced <i>naw-SAW</i>]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #5375 BDB #669
ʿêth (עִתְּ) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object) with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85

Translation: ...they will bear [this burden] with you.

These judges will help bear much of Moses' burden.

Part five: these chosen men will take on some of Moses's responsibility and take off the constant pressure of people bickering over small matters from before him so that Moses can deal with the weightier matters.

Exodus 18:22 They will judge the people all of the time. And it will be, [for] every important matter, they will bring [that] to you; but for minor matters, they themselves will judge [those]. [This will] lighten from upon you [the heavy load of cases]; they will bear [this burden] with you. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 18:21–22 You will choose from all the people men of authority, those who fear Elohim, men of truth, haters of bribery [and greed]; and you will place [them] over the people [lit., *them*]. [There will be] officials of thousands, officials of hundreds, officials of fifties, and officials of tens. They will judge the people all of the time. And it will be, [for] every important matter, they will bring [that] to you; but for minor matters, they themselves will judge [those]. [This will] lighten from upon you [the heavy load of cases]; they will bear [this burden] with you. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 18:21–22 You must first select from the people men with authority, those who fear God, men of truth, those who hate bribery and greed. You will place them them into organized systems of authority, officials over a thousand, officials over a hundred, officials over fifty and officials over ten. So, once this is all organized, then extremely important matters will still be brought to you; but the less significant matters they will judge themselves. This will lighten your case load as they will bear much of this burden with you. (Kukis paraphrase)

A brief review of Exodus 18:16–22:

After spending a day at work with his son-in-law, Jethro determined that Moses was doing too much and that he was involved in a great deal of trivial activities. He has described the kind of men that Moses needed to choose to replace him.

So far, this is Moses' description of his duties followed by the advice of Jethro:

Exodus 18:16 “Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me to judge between one man and another, and I make known to them the statutes and laws of God.” (ESV; capitalized)

Moses allowed the people to come before him and he would judge their disputes. Moses would explain who is right and teach them the divine principles related to his decision.

Exodus 18:17–18 But Moses' father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not good. Surely you and these people with you will wear yourselves out, because the task is too heavy for you. You cannot handle it alone. (ESV; capitalized)

Moses' father-in-law could see that Moses was wearing himself out, judging all of these cases. It was just too much for him to take on.

Exodus 18:19–21 Now listen to me; I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their causes to Him. Teach them the statutes and laws, and show them the way to live and the work they must do. Furthermore, select capable men from among the people—God-fearing, trustworthy men who are averse to dishonest gain. Appoint them over the people as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. (ESV; capitalized)

Jethro told Moses, “You need a system of authorities and perhaps hundreds of people under you doing what you do.”

Moses was to appoint a large number of judges in tiers of authority. This would relieve him of the pressure of having to do almost everything.

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. (NKJV)

Jethro has told Moses, “You need to change this entire system of judging cases.” Moses listened to his father-in-law and followed his advice.

Application: It is quite important that you are not arrogant. There will be times that you will hear advice and something in that advice is worthwhile. Don't be a know-it-all. Don't reject someone out of hand for whatever reason. I had a close friend of mine make a complaint/observation about the work that I was doing. Now, I knew his situation and I knew that he had a long ways to go before he grew spiritually. Quite frankly, I knew him to be mixed up and a part of the **tongues movement**. Nevertheless, his observation was exactly right; and that changed how I approached my writing significantly in one respect because of the comments which he made.

Application: One of the most important responsibilities of a president is the ability to choose the right men to subordinate his policy to. And the men which he choose must also be able to choose the right men under them to get the job done.

Application: I wrote a portion of this chapter in 2019,¹⁵ and at that time, President Trump appointed Attorney General Barr to oversee the justice department. This is one of the most important positions for a president to fill, along with Secretary of State. Now, Barr does not study case law and go to court, and argue this or that case—he oversees the entire justice department and appoints men (or, more accurately, oversees men appointed by the president) who actually do the work. He sets the policy and acts as an intermediary between the function of government and the people of the United States. It appears that members of the previous administration have weaponized various departments of government to work against the opposing party (Trump's party). If this happened, then this is one of the most egregious abuses of power ever seen in United States history. The pick for Attorney General is so important because he cannot be seen as using his branch of government to go after the opposing party. They have to be investigated thoroughly, and if charges are brought against any members of the previous administration, then we have the potential of a veritable crap storm. 30–40% of Americans will automatically see this as a purely partisan act; and the attorney general will have to stand before American and give a very thorough explanation as to what is taking place, what laws were broken, and how important it is to prosecute these people. If no one from the previous administration is arrested and prosecuted, then, there will be 30–40% of Americans who are going to believe that there are two systems of justice, one for one party and one for the other party. Given the potential of this investigation dividing America even more than it is already, the current Attorney General has been given one of the most difficult jobs than an attorney general has ever had before. This ought to provide a good current example of just how important the delegation of authority is. President Trump cannot get personally involved in any of this, as the theory is, he was the primary person under attack by members of the previous administration. This particular choice of the delegation of authority will stand in American history as being one of the most important choices a president has ever made (it may not be presented like this by liberal historians, but it is). I write this now from the perspective of 2023, and time has shown Mr. Barr to be a poor choice.

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. (NKJV)

So Jethro tells his son-in-law, Moses, you need to delegate your authority and you need to be circumspect about the men that you choose. Since we live in a Constitutional republic, this is a concept which ought to be on your mind when you vote for people in authority. They need to be able to delegate responsibility; and they need to be able to choose good men under them (who, in turn, must be able to choose good men under them).

¹⁵ My work on this chapter began in 2017 and continues to 2023.

Application: Another important lesson which comes out of this is not just the concept of delegated authority, for the concept of levels of authority. When you work for a company (like Subway sandwiches), and deliveries of lettuce are not coming in as they should be, the sandwich maker does not call the CEO of Subway Corp. (I have no idea about their authority structure) and complain. There is a line of authority which he begins to climb to solve the problem. Similarly, let's say that Subway sends out men into the field to eat at various Subways and to give their evaluation (I don't think that they do this; I am simply making up an example). That person should not publically berate some person making a sandwich for him; and, in many cases, should not even make recommendations about a particular employee. He is going to turn in a report which may include some general remarks about the actions of employees. This is because they are not exactly in the same authority structure.

Application: In a previous administration of the United States (the Obama administration), there were people in positions of power who had no concept of the chain of command. So, if some White House person did not like what was happening in Afghanistan, it appears that they would actually call commanders in the field and attempt to micro-manage their affairs. This shows a total confusion about levels of authority, authority structure and the chain of command. Furthermore, it revealed great arrogance in those doing the micro-managing, as they would have had no actual experience in that which they are managing. At the same time, when people in the field made requests, going up the chain of command (such as those who worked at our embassy in Benghazi), these concerns appear to have been ignored. When someone properly goes up the chain of command, then those in authority must make good decisions and deal with expressed concerns. Even to this day (I began to write this in 2019), we have no idea where the President was when the attack on Benghazi was taking place, who was in the situation room when this was happening, who was giving orders or what orders had been given (logically, whatever response there was or monitoring there was would have made those in charge look very bad, so what they did or didn't do will remain unknown). Since all of these people work for the citizens of the United States, we should know where they were, what they did or did not do. We do not know any of these things and we may never know.

What I am doing here is taking some very important information—the delegation of authority and the chain of command—and making some modern-day applications.

If the thing the this you will do and has commanded you Elohim and you have been able to stand and also all the people the this over their place will go in peace."

Exodus
18:23

If you do this thing and [if] Elohim commands [it], then you will be able to stand [without being totally exhausted] and also, this people will go to their place in peace."

If you do what I am suggesting here—assuming that God commands it—then you will be able to perform your duties without being exhausted and the people, being handled by a more efficient court system, will be able to return to their own homes in peace."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	If the thing the this you will do and has commanded you Elohim and you have been able to stand and also all the people the this over their place will go in peace."
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum (Onkelos)	If thou wilt do this, and the Lord teach thee, thou wilt be able to endure, and (of) all this people (every one) will go to his place in peace.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	If thou wilt do this, and exempt thyself from judging (every case) as the Lord shall give thee instruction, thou wilt be able to continue to hear them; and Aharon also and his sons, and all the elders of this people, will resort to the place of Judgment in peace.
Revised Douay-Rheims	If you do this, you shall fulfil the commandment of God, and shall be able to bear his precepts: and all this people shall return to their places with peace.

Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	If you will do this thing, and God commands you so, then you will be able to endure, and all of these people also will go to their place in peace."
Peshitta (Syriac)	If you shall do this thing, and God commands you so, then you shall be able to endure, and all this people shall also go each one to his own house in peace.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	If thou wilt do this thing, God shall strengthen thee, and thou shalt be able to attend, and all this people shall come with peace into their own place.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	If you do this, and God gives approval, then you will be able to go on without weariness, and all this people will go to their tents in peace.
Easy English	If God commands you to do this, please obey him. Then the work will not be too hard for you. You will keep your good health. And all these people will go home and they will be happy.'
Easy-to-Read Version–2001	If you do these things, Lord willing, then you will be still able to do your job. And at the same time, the people can go home with their problems solved."
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	If you do this as God directs you, then you will be able to do your job without tiring yourself out. And the people can still have all their problems solved before they return home."
Good News Bible (TEV)	If you do this, as God commands, you will not wear yourself out, and all these people can go home with their disputes settled."
<i>The Message</i>	If you handle the work this way, you'll have the strength to carry out whatever God commands you, and the people in their settings will flourish also."
Names of God Bible	If Elohim commands you, and you do this, you will be able to continue your work, and all these people will have their disagreements settled so that they can go home."
NIRV	If this is what God wants and if you do it, then you will be able to carry the load. And all these people will go home satisfied."
New Simplified Bible	»If you do this, as God commands, you will not wear yourself out. All these people can go home with their disputes settled.«

Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	This is the way God wants it done. You won't be under nearly as much stress, and everyone else will return home feeling satisfied
The Living Bible	If you follow this advice, and if the Lord agrees, you will be able to endure the pressures, and there will be peace and harmony in the camp."
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	If you do this and God tells you to do it, then you will be able to keep your strength. And all these people will go to their place in peace."
New Living Translation	If you follow this advice, and if God commands you to do so, then you will be able to endure the pressures, and all these people will go home in peace."
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	If you do that, and if God agrees, you will be able to endure the stress, and all the people will be able to go home peacefully with their disputes settled quickly."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And if you do that, God will strengthen you, you will [have time to take care of more important matters], and these people will [return to their tents] more peacefully.'
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	If you do this and God directs you, then you will be able to endure. And all these people will be able to go back to their homes much happier."

New Advent (Knox) Bible	These will administer justice to the people from day to day, referring graver matters to thee, but deciding for themselves all that is of less moment. Share thy burden with others, and find relief; so thou wilt be able to carry out God's commands, and endure the weight of all his claims upon thee, and yet all these folk will go home satisfied. V. 22 is included for context.
Translation for Translators	If you do that, and <i>I think that</i> God is telling you to do it (OR, if God tells you to do it), you will not become exhausted, and all the people will be able to go home feeling satisfied about the decisions, <i>with their disputes settled quickly</i> ".

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia Translation	"If you will do this, and God instructs you so to act, then you will be able to stand it, and all these people will also come to their place in peace."
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	"If you do this and GOD confirms it, then you can appoint it, and all these people can arrange their affairs with ease."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	If you shall do this thing, then you shall be able to endure that which God charges you with all, and all this people shall go to their places quietly.
Wikipedia Bible Project	.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	If you do this, God will guide you and you will be able to cope with this duty; and all these people will reach their place in peace."
The Heritage Bible	If you shall do this word, and God commands you, then you shall be able to stand, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.
New American Bible (2002)	If you do this, when God gives you orders you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied."
New American Bible (2011)	If you do this, and God so commands you,* you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people, too, will go home content."
	* [18:23] And God so commands you: i.e., and God approves.
New English Bible—1970	If you do this, God will give you strength, and you will be able to go on. And, moreover, this whole people will here and now regain peace and harmony.'
New Jerusalem Bible	If you do this -- and may God so command you -- you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.'
Revised English Bible—1989	If you do this, then God will direct you and you will be able to go on. And, moreover, this whole people will arrive at its destination in harmony."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	If you do this — and God is directing you to do it — you will be able to endure; and all these people too will arrive at their destination peacefully."
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	"If you do this word, and Elohim shall command you, then you shall be able to stand and all this people also go to their place in peace."
Tree of Life Version	If you do this thing as God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their places in <i>shalom</i> ."

Weird English, 19th Century English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	IF YOU WILL DO THIS THING, THE THEOS (<i>Alpha & Omega</i>) SHALL STRENGTHEN YOU, AND YOU SHALL BE ABLE TO ATTEND, AND ALL THIS PEOPLE SHALL COME WITH PEACE INTO THEIR OWN PLACE."
Awful Scroll Bible	You was to effect this concern, even as he of mighty ones is to have laid charge. Even is you to have been able to stand, and the people were to go in to their place in peace.

Concordant Literal Version	If you shall do this thing then Elohim will instruct you further, so you can stand. Moreover, all this people, it shall come upon its place in peace.
exeGesés companion Bible	If you work this word and Elohim misvah you so, then you become able to stand and all this people also go to their place in shalom.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	If thou shalt do this thing, and Elohim command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and kol HaAm hazeh shall also go to their place in shalom.
Rotherham's <i>Emphasized B.</i>	If, this thing, thou wilt do, and God shall command thee, then shalt thou be able to endure,—yea, moreover, all this people, shall go in, unto their dwellings, contented.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	If you will do this thing and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure [the responsibility], and all these people will also go [back] to their tents in peace.”
The Expanded Bible	If you do this as God commands you, then you will be able to do your job, and all the people will go home [to their place] with their disagreements solved [in peace].”
Kretzmann's Commentary	If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, to hold out under the burden resting upon him, and all this people shall go to their place in peace, reach their destination in safety.
The Voice	Jethro: If you do what I advise and God directs you, then you will be able to handle the pressure. Not only that, but all these people <i>standing around needing help, they</i> will be able to return to their tents at peace.

Bible Translations with an Excess of Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach	<p>If you do this thing, and the Lord commands you, you will be able to survive, and also, all this people will come upon their place in peace.”</p> <p>and the Lord commands you, you will be able to survive: Consult God; if He commands you to do this, you will be able to endure, but if He prevents you [from doing it], you will be unable to endure. — [from Mechilta]</p> <p>and also, all this people: Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the 70 elders who now accompany you. — [from Mechilta]</p>
Kaplan Translation	<p>If you agree to this, and God concurs, you will be able to survive. This entire nation will then also be able to attain its goal of peace.’</p> <p>concurs (Mekhilta; Rashi; Ibn Ezra; Ralbag). Or, 'when God orders you [to judge them]' (Rashbam); or, 'then God will be able to give you the commandments' (Targum Yonathan; Sekhel Tov; Abarbanel; Div'rey Shalom; Hirsch; Josephus 3:4:1).</p> <p>its goal of peace (Hirsch). Literally, 'will be able to come to its place in peace.' Or, 'all the people will be able to go home in peace' (Rashbam; Ibn Ezra; Sekhel Tov; Ramban).</p>
NET Bible®	<p>If you do this thing, and God so commands you,⁵⁶ then you will be able⁵⁷ to endure,⁵⁸ and all these people⁵⁹ will be able to go⁶⁰ home⁶¹ satisfied.”⁶²</p> <p>^{56tn} The form is a Piel perfect with vav (ו) consecutive; it carries the same nuance as the preceding imperfect in the conditional clause.</p> <p>^{57tn} The perfect tense with vav (ו) consecutive now appears in the apodosis of the conditional sentence — “if you do this...then you will be able.”</p> <p>^{58tn} Heb “to stand.” B. Jacob (Exodus, 501) suggests that there might be a humorous side to this: “you could even do this standing up.”</p> <p>^{59tn} Literally “this people.”</p> <p>^{60tn} The verb is the simple imperfect, “will go,” but given the sense of the passage a potential nuance seems in order.</p> <p>^{61tn} Heb “his place.”</p>

^{62tn} Heb “in peace.”

^{sn} See further T. D. Weinshall, “The Organizational Structure Proposed by Jethro to Moses (Ex. 18:17),” *Public Administration in Israel and Abroad* 12 (1972): 9-13; and H. Reviv, “The Traditions Concerning the Inception of the Legal System in Israel: Significance and Dating,” *ZAW* 94 (1982): 566-75.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...if you will do this (matter), and " Elohiym ^{Powers} will direct you, (then) you will be able to stand, and also, this people will come upon his area in completeness,...
C. Thompson (updated) OT	If you do this God will strengthen you so that you will be able to endure, and all this people will go to their place with peace.
English Standard Version	If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace."
Green's Literal Translation	If you do this thing, and God command you, you will be able to stand; and also this people will go in peace to their place.
New American Standard B.	If you do this thing and God so commands you, then you will be able to ^[x] endure, and all ^[y] these people also will go to ^[z] their place in peace."
	^[x] Exodus 18:23 Lit stand
	^[y] Exodus 18:23 Lit this
	^[z] Exodus 18:23 Lit his
Young's Updated LT	If you will this thing, and God has commanded you, then you have been able to stand, and all this people also goes in unto its place in peace."

The gist of this passage: Jethro adds that, if Moses does this, according to God's will, that people will be able to stand before him (or the other judges) and have his matter adjudicated more quickly (and therefore, soon return to your place).

Exodus 18:23a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾim (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
The particle ʾim (אִם) can be used as a demonstrative (<i>lo, behold</i>), an interrogative (usually expecting a negative response and often used with other particles and rhetorically), and as a conditional particle (<i>if, though</i>); an indication of a wish or desire (<i>oh that, if only</i> ; this is a rare usage).			
ʾeth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command; business, occupation; case; something; manner</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260

Exodus 18:23a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿāsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to produce, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

Translation: *If you do this thing...*

Jethro ends his set of recommendations by saying, “If you try this out...”

This thing is two words in the Greek. The first word is *dâbâr* (דָּבָר) [pronounced *daw-BAWR*] and it means *word, speech, thing, matter*. Strong's #1697 BDB #182. It is followed by the masculine singular demonstrative adjective *zeh* (זֶה) [pronounced *zeh*]. Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260. Together, they mean, *this word, this thing, this matter*.

Exodus 18:23b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
tsâvâh (צָוָה) [pronounced <i>tsaw-VAW</i>]	<i>to commission, to mandate, to appoint; to ordain; to lay charge upon, to give charge to, to charge [command, order]; to instruct [as in, giving an order]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect, 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6680 BDB #845
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: *...and [if] Elohim commands [it],...*

When Jethro adds *and God commands you*, he is adding, in his own way, *if this is God's will*. Jethro does not want to be presumptuous and propose something which would fall outside of the plan of God.

Jethro adds, if God approves this, if God wills this, if God commands this. Although Jethro is a priest to God, he did not fully appreciate or understand all the God was able to do. So, he is trying not to be arrogant here, and saying, “Listen, this is your only solution.” If God requires a different approach, the Jethro was fine with that.

Exodus 18:23c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Exodus 18:23c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâkôl (יָכֹל) [also yâkôwl (יָכֹל)] [pronounced yaw-COAL]	<i>to be able, can, to have the ability, to have the power to; to be able to bear; to be able to bring oneself [to do anything]; to be lawful, to be permitted; to be powerful, to prevail</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3201 BDB #407
ʿâmad (עָמַד) [pronounced ġaw-MAHD]	<i>to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure, to withstand; to stop, to cease</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #5975 BDB #763

To be stabilized is the Qal infinitive construct of ʿâmad (עָמַד) [pronounced ġaw-MAHD], which means *to stand, to take a stand, to be stabilized*.

Translation: ...then you will be able to stand [without being totally exhausted]...

Literally, v. 23c is, *and you will be able to stand*. The word *to stand* is the Qal infinitive construct of ʿâmad (עָמַד) [pronounced ġaw-MAHD], which means, *to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure, to withstand; to stop, to cease*. Strong's #5975 BDB #763. Jethro could see, after a day, how wearing that this was on Moses.

Jethro has observed Moses and he is judging every single day, morning to night, without any sort of a break; and the court cases seem to continue to stack up. With what Jethro is suggesting, should allow Moses to continue his own work (writing and leading the sons of Israel), but without being totally worn out.

The people themselves would also find themselves becoming weary from standing for too long a time, waiting for Moses to make many legal decisions before coming to their place for justice. Waiting in such a courtroom could be quite difficult and lengthy; and standing there for so long made these people exhausted (and Moses too).

Exodus 18:23d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
Together, the wâw conjunction and the gam particle might mean <i>and also, together with, along with, joined with, and, furthermore, and furthermore</i> .			
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

Exodus 18:23d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘am (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i>]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260
‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
mâqôwm (מִקְוָם) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHM</i>]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
bôw' (בָּוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
shâlôwm (שְׁלוֹם) or shâlôm (שָׁלוֹם) [pronounced <i>shaw-LOHM</i>]	<i>completeness, soundness, health and welfare, well, in good health; peace, prosperity, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7965 BDB #1022

Translation: ...and also, this people will go to their place in peace.”

This will also allow the people to have their cases fully adjudicated and be able to return to their own place, without having to stand around for days to await judgment.

The other problem is, not only will the people hang around much longer than the situation warrants, but with the wrong judgment, they might find themselves rather unhappy about the outcome, and not feel as if they were given a fair shake. By choosing men who are fair, who are willing to learn God's laws, who are not tempted by a bribe, these men can make decisions which will line up with Moses' decisions.

Peace is exactly the word you think it is: shâlôwm (שְׁלוֹם) or shâlôm (שָׁלוֹם) [pronounced *shaw-LOHM*] and it means *happy, in prosperity, in peace and well-being*. It means that the people will be pleased with the change.

Right away we notice that Moses is one who will listen to another person's point of view. He is not a person who, because God speaks to him directly, that feels he has no need to listen to another human being. Now certainly he would shun human viewpoint; but he is not above listening to the wisdom of his father-in-law.

Later, God the Holy Spirit will tell us that Moses was the meekest man on earth. This does not mean that he was some wimpy pushover that people liked to shove around. Moses was *grace-oriented*; his soul was meek (or, grace

oriented) and he revealed it in situations like this where he listens to the advice of his father-in-law. Moses recognizes that Jethro's suggestions are well thought out, and he takes this advice. There are a number of areas and circumstances where I could have done much better had I been meek (grace-oriented) enough to take the advice of another person. Sometimes I have taken good advice and sometimes I did not.

Now, the reason that I don't believe Moses went too far with his authority is, he will show great humility here when interacting with his father-in-law. He could have said, "Listen, Jethro, this is my thing that I have going here; I know what I am doing. You just showed up out of nowhere, and you have spent just a single day observing how I do thing. Perhaps you ought to hang around a bit longer before you start giving me advice." That sort of answer would have been brimming with arrogance. Moses was not like that. He will listen to Jethro's advice, he recognizes it as good, and he will follow it.

Illustration: I began to write this commentary in 2019 and Donald Trump is the president of the United States. From what I have picked up, President Trump, like all presidents, makes the final decisions. However, he, probably more than any other president, listens to the advice of his aides and considers it. This is something that a man would learn from running many businesses. You learn that you do not know everything, so you surround yourself with men who know many things. This way, you can pick their brains legitimately. There is nothing smarter than a president who knows when to listen and when to take advice. Despite all of the propaganda concerning this president, I believe that is the kind of man that he is.

Exodus 18:23 *If you do this thing and [if] Elohim commands [it], then you will be able to stand [without being totally exhausted] and also, this people will go to their place in peace.*" (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Jethro is Moses' father-in-law, and he has come to Moses in the desert to bring his wife and sons back to him. After observing Moses in court presiding over every single case of neighbor against neighbor (from a population of two million), Jethro has convinced Moses that he needs to parcel out some of his authority, and organize a number of judges as well as a system of courts. There would be levels of judges and levels of courts.

Jethro continues to advise his son-in-law.

Exodus 18:23 *If you do what I am suggesting here—assuming that God commands it—then you will be able to perform your duties without being exhausted and the people, being handled by a more efficient court system, will be able to return to their own homes in peace.*" (Kukis paraphrase)

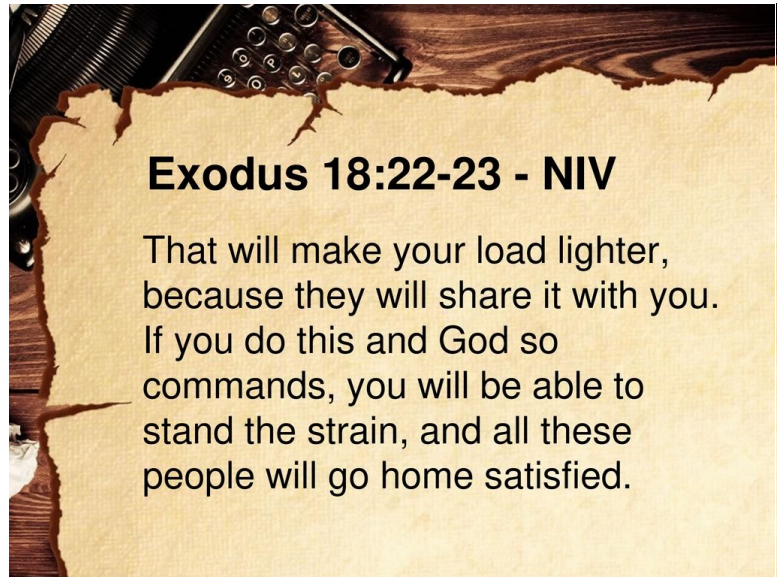
This is Jethro's advice to Moses. If Moses follows this advice, he would be given the time and the strength and the ability to stand before the people, still as their ruler. The people going to their own dwellings in peace means that they will be satisfied with the situation. That is, justice will be meted out more quickly; they will have a chance to appeal to a higher court; and the laws will be made clear to them. As a result, the act of breaking a law will be a bit more obvious or interacting poorly with another Israelite might be made more clear to them.

Jethro is a very intelligent man and he, after being among the Hebrew people for a very short time (apparently, the day after the sacrificial meal), he sees a big problem that needs rectifying. No doubt, you have dealt with a problem or a situation, and someone has suggested, *we need to have fresh eyes on this*. This can mean one of two things: (1) everyone adjourns for the day and returns to consider this situation again tomorrow; or (2) someone from outside the inner circle needs to be brought in to take a look at the situation. Jethro is this pair of fresh eyes on the situation; and he sees immediately that Moses cannot hope to judge all the disputes and problems of 2 million people. This would be a never-ending thorn in Moses' side, as well as a problem which would continue to get bigger.

We will learn two things about Jethro and Moses: Jethro is a wise man and Moses has genuine humility.

Application: Many times, a business brings a consultant in to review what is taking place in the business. It is not unusual for there to be more people in a business than is necessary. It is also not unusual for those heading the organization not being able to determine where cuts need to be made.

Application: Many businesses employ a very similar technique. Their company is stagnant, bloated, and/or stalled; so they bring in a consulting company to turn things around. Now, this is often presented in movies as a firing of hundreds of people, even though that is not the only thing that a consultant might come up with. Sometimes, the key is branding; sometimes the key is removing a division of the company which is leading nowhere and pulling the company down. What a consultant does is provide a fresh set of eyes on a company, most often with the intent of increasing profit. In many cases, this could save a company from bankruptcy, and thus save the company as well as hundreds of jobs.



Exodus 18:22–23 (NIV—a summation) (a graphic); from [Slide Player](#); accessed July 19, 2023.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Moses follows the advice of his father-in-law

And so listens Moses to a voice of his father-in-law and so he does all that he said. And so chooses Moses men of strength from all Israel and so he makes them heads over the people, princes of thousands, princes of hundreds, princes of fifties and princes of tens. And have judged the people in every time. The word the hard they bring unto Moses and all the word the small they judge themselves.

Exodus
18:24–26

Consequently, Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and he did all that he said. Moses chose men of ability from all Israel and he made them heads over the people—officials of thousands, officials of hundreds, officials of fifties and officials over tens. [These men] would judge the people all of the time. They [still] brought the difficult cases to Moses, but they judged the small cases themselves.

Consequently, Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and he did all that he suggested. Moses chose men of ability from all Israel and he gave them authority over the people. He organized these officials to be over specific groups and they would do nearly all of the adjudication. If a case was difficult, then they would bring it to Moses. However, they judged the less difficult cases themselves.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so listens Moses to a voice of his father-in-law and so he does all that he said. And so chooses Moses men of strength from all Israel and so he makes them heads over the people, princes of thousands, princes of hundreds, princes of fifties

and princes of tens. And have judged the people in every time. The word the hard they bring unto Moses and all the word the small they judge themselves.

Dead Sea Scrolls
Targum (Onkelos)

.
And Mosheh hearkened to his father in law, and did all that he had said. And Mosheh chose men of ability from all Israel, and appointed them heads over the people; chiefs [Sam. Vers., "scribes."] of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties, and chiefs of tens; and they judged the people at all times; a weighty thing they brought to Mosheh, and every minor thing they judged themselves.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

And Mosheh hearkened to his father in law, and did all that he had said. And Mosheh selected able men from all Israel, and appointed them chief, over the people, rabbans of thousands, six hundred; rabbans of hundreds, six thousand; rabbans of fifties, twelve thousand; and rabbans of tens, six Myriads. And they judged the people at all times; a bard case they, brought to Mosheh; but every light matter they judged it..

Revised Douay-Rheims

And when Moses heard this, he did all things that he had suggested unto him. And choosing able men out of all Israel, he appointed them rulers of the people, rulers over thousands, and over hundreds, and over fifties, and over tens. And they judged the people at all times: and whatsoever was of greater difficulty they referred to him, and they judged the easier cases only.

Aramaic ESV of Peshitta

So Mosha listened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. Mosha chose able men out of all Yisrael, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. They judged the people at all times. They brought the hard causes to Mosha, but every small matter they judged themselves.

Peshitta (Syriac)

So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had told him. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and appointed them officers over the people, officers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. And they judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.

Updated Brenton (Greek)

And Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did whatsoever he said to him. And Moses chose out able men out of all Israel, and he made them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, and captains of fifties and captains of tens over the people. And they judged the people at all times; and every too burdensome matter they brought to Moses, but every light matter they judged themselves.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English

So Moses took note of the words of his father-in-law, and did as he had said. And he made selection of able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, captains of thousands, captains of hundreds and of fifties and of tens. And they were judges in the causes of the people at all times: the hard questions they put before Moses; but on every small point they gave decisions themselves.

Easy English

Then Moses listened to Jethro. And Moses did everything that he suggested. Moses chose good and wise men from all the Israelites. He made them leaders and officers of the people. Some were officers over 1000 people; some were officers over 100 people. Some were officers over 50 people and some were officers over 10 people. They worked as judges for the people at all times. They told Moses about the difficult problems, but they decided the easy problems without his help.

Easy-to-Read Version—2006

So Moses did what Jethro told him. Moses chose good men from among the Israelites. He made them leaders over the people. There were rulers over 1000 people, 100 people, 50 people, and ten people. These rulers were judges for the

	people. The people could always bring their arguments to these rulers, and Moses had to decide only the most important cases.
<i>The Message</i>	Moses listened to the counsel of his father-in-law and did everything he said. Moses picked competent men from all Israel and set them as leaders over the people who were organized by the thousand, by the hundred, by fifty, and by ten. They took over the everyday work of judging among the people. They brought the hard cases to Moses, but in the routine cases they were the judges.
NIRV	Moses listened to his father-in-law. He did everything Jethro said. He chose men of ability from the whole community of Israel. He made them leaders of the people. They became officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. They judged the people at all times. They brought the hard cases to Moses. But they decided the easy ones themselves.
New Simplified Bible	Moses took Jethro's advice and chose capable men from among all the Israelites. He appointed them as leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. They judged the people on a permanent basis. The difficult cases were taken to Moses but they decided the smaller disputes themselves.

Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Moses followed Jethro's advice. He chose some competent leaders from every tribe in Israel and put them over groups of ten, fifty, a hundred, and a thousand. They served as judges, deciding the easy cases themselves, but bringing the more difficult ones to Moses.
The Living Bible	Moses listened to his father-in-law's advice and followed this suggestion. He chose able men from all over Israel and made them judges over the people—thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. They were constantly available to administer justice. They brought the hard cases to Moses but judged the smaller matters themselves.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	Moses listened to his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. Moses chose able men out of all Israel. And he made them leaders over the people, leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. They judged the people at all times. They would bring the big troubles to Moses. But they would judge every small trouble themselves.
New Living Translation	Moses listened to his father-in-law's advice and followed his suggestions. He chose capable men from all over Israel and appointed them as leaders over the people. He put them in charge of groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. These men were always available to solve the people's common disputes. They brought the major cases to Moses, but they took care of the smaller matters themselves.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that Jethro told him. Then Moses chose capable men from among the Israelite people and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. Moses chose them to decide about the people's disputes. They brought the difficult cases to Moses, but they decided the matters that were not difficult by themselves.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well, Moses paid attention to his father-in-law's suggestion and did everything that he said. He chose capable men throughout all of Israel and made them chiefs of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties, and chiefs of tens. Then they judged the people, and whenever a matter was too weighty, they brought it to Moses, while they judged the lighter matters.
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	.

New Advent (Knox) Bible	Moses listened to all that he proposed, and carried it into effect. He chose out here and there among the Israelites active men, and made them rulers of the people, with the charge of a tribe, or a hundred families, or fifty families, or ten; and these administered justice to the people day after day, referring graver matters to him, and deciding for themselves all that was of less moment.
Translation for Translators	Moses/I accepted what his/my father-in-law Jethro suggested. Moses/I chose capable men from among the Israeli people. They were appointed permanently to make decisions about the people's disputes. They brought the difficult cases to Moses/me, but they decided the matters that were not difficult by themselves.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia Translation	.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Moses, consequently, listened to the suggestion of his father-in-law, and did all that he said. Moses therefore chose strong men from all Israel, and placed them as heads over the people; chiefs of thousands and chief of hundreds and chiefs of tens, and they judged the people at all times in their affairs ;—bringing the difficult matters to Moses,—but in the small affairs they decided for them- selves.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.
Lexham English Bible	So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. And Moses chose men of virtue out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, princes over thousands, over hundreds, over fifties, and over tens. And they judged the people at all seasons; the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.
Unlocked Literal Bible	So Moses listened to his father-in-law's words and did everything that he had said. Moses chose capable men from all Israel and made them heads over the people, leaders in charge of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. They judged the people in normal circumstances. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but they themselves judged all the small cases.
Urim-Thummim Version	So Moses consented to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had proposed. Then Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made them chiefs over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens. And they governed the people in all seasons but the difficult matters they brought to Moses, but every insignificant matter they judged themselves.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Moses listened to his father in law, and did all that he said. And Moses selected men of arms from all of Israel, and gave them as leaders on the people--- managers of thousands, managers of hundreds, managers of fifties, and managers of tens. And they judged the people at all times: the difficult thing they did bringeth to Moses, and all the little things they did judgeth.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And Moses attentively heard the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said. And Moses chose mortal men of resources out of all Israel, and gave them as heads over the people, chief rulers of thousands, chief rulers of hundreds, chief rulers of fifties, and chief rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all times; the hard words they brought to Moses, and every small word they judged themselves.
New American Bible (2002)	Moses followed the advice of his father-in-law and did all that he had suggested. He picked out able men from all Israel and put them in charge of the people as officers over groups of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. They rendered decisions for the people in all ordinary cases. The more difficult cases they referred to Moses, but all the lesser cases they settled themselves.
New American Bible (2011)	Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said. He picked out able men from all Israel and put them in charge of the people as commanders of

	thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. They rendered decisions for the people in all routine cases. The more difficult cases they referred to Moses, but all the lesser cases they settled themselves.
New Jerusalem Bible	Moses took his father-in-law's advice and did just as he said. Moses chose capable men from all Israel and put them in charge of the people as heads of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. These acted as the people's permanent judges. They referred hard cases to Moses but decided minor matters themselves.
Revised English Bible—1989	Moses heeded his father-in-law and did all he had suggested. He chose capable men from all Israel and appointed them leaders of the people, officers over units of a thousand, of a hundred, of fifty, or of ten. They sat as a permanent court, bringing the difficult cases to Moses but deciding simple cases themselves.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	<i>(iii)</i> Moshe paid attention to his father-in-law's counsel and did everything he said. Moshe chose competent men from all Isra'el and made them heads over the people, in charge of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. As a general rule, they settled the people's disputes — the difficult cases they brought to Moshe, but every simple matter they decided themselves.
Kaplan Translation	Moses took his father-in-law's advice, and did all that he said. He chose capable men from all Israel, and he appointed them as administrators over the people, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens. They administered justice on a regular basis, bringing the difficult cases to Moses, and judging the simple cases by themselves.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And Mosheh listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he said. And Mosheh chose able men out of all Yisra'el, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they rightly ruled the people at all times – the hard matters they brought to Mosheh, but they rightly ruled every small matter themselves.

Weird English, 𐤀𐤋𐤁𐤀 English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	AND MOSES HEARKENED TO THE VOICE OF HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, AND DID WHATSOEVER HE SAID TO HIM. AND MOSES CHOSE OUT ABLE MEN OUT OF ALL ISRAEL, AND HE MADE THEM CAPTAINS OF THOUSANDS AND CAPTAINS OF HUNDREDS, AND CAPTAINS OF FIFTIES AND CAPTAINS OF TENS OVER THE PEOPLE. AND THEY JUDGED THE PEOPLE AT ALL TIMES; AND EVERY MAJOR MATTER THEY BROUGHT TO MOSES, BUT EVERY LIGHT MATTER THEY JUDGED THEMSELVES.
Awful Scroll Bible	Moses was to listen to the frivolity of he, to whom he is being son-in-law of, even was he to effect that he is to have directed. Moses was to select men of ability from out of Isra-el, and was to set them as chiefs over the people; chiefs of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties, and chiefs of tens. They are to have given judgment for the people, and on the occurrence of a difficult concern, it was to be brought in to Moses, and the small concern they were to give judgment.
Concordant Literal Version	So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. Moses chose men of ability from all Israel and set them as heads over the people, chiefs of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties and chiefs of tens. They judged the people in every season. The hard matter were they bringing to Moses, and every small matter they were judging themselves.
exeGesés companion Bible	And Mosheh hearkens to the voice of his in law and works all he says: and Mosheh chooses valiant men from all Yisra El and gives them heads over the people

- governors of thousands, governors of hundreds,
governors of fifties and governors of tens:
and they judge the people at all times:
they bring the hard words to Mosheh;
but every small word they judge themselves.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

So Moshe paid heed to the voice of his khoten, and did all that he had said.
And Moshe chose anshei chayil out of kol Yisroel, and made them rashim over HaAm, over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.
And they judged HaAm at all times; the davar hakasheh (difficult case) they brought unto Moshe, but every devar hakaton they judged themselves.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible

So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything that he had said. Moses chose able men from all Israel and made them heads over the people, leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens [from the highest to the lowest judicial levels]. And they judged the people at all times; they would bring the difficult cases to Moses, but every minor dispute they judged and decided themselves.

The Expanded Bible

So Moses listened to [^Lthe voice of] his father-in-law and did everything he said. He ·chose [selected] ·capable [virtuous; noble] men from all the Israelites and made them ·leaders [heads] over the people; they were officers over groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. These officers ·solved disagreements among [judged] the people all the time. They brought the hard cases to Moses, but they ·decided [judged] the ·simple [^Lsmall] cases themselves.

Kretzmann's Commentary

So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father's in-law, and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. This institution was only afterwards developed in greater detail, Num. 11:16-17. And they judged the people at all seasons, Moses having charged and obligated them to do their work with all considerate impartiality. The hard causes they brought unto Moses, as the final court of appeal, but every small matter they judged themselves. It is not the will of God that His servants should needlessly wear themselves out in the service of the Church. It is well-pleasing to Him that the work of the Church, both in general and in the individual congregations, be distributed according to the gifts which He has given. Thus the work will result in the benefit of all.

The Voice

Moses accepted Jethro's advice and did all that he said. He chose competent leaders and put them in charge of the community of Israel. He divided *and subdivided* the nation into groups of a thousand, hundred, fifty, and ten, and he appointed a leader over each group. The *righteous* leaders judged the people whenever disputes or problems arose. Any major quarrel, they brought to Moses *for his judgment*; but every minor argument, they judged themselves.

Bible Translations with an Excess of Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach

Moses obeyed his father in law, and he did all that he said. Moses chose men of substance out of all Israel and appointed them as heads of the people, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens. And they would judge the people at all times; the difficult case they would bring to Moses, but any minor case they themselves would judge.

And they would judge: וְסָפוּ: [Onkelos renders:], אָמַעְתִּי וַיִּיָּדֻ, And they judge the people. [Unlike this word in verse 22, which denotes the imperative, this denotes the present.]

they would bring: Heb. וַיָּבִיאוּ. [Onkelos renders:] וַיָּבִיאוּ, they bring [in the present tense and not in the future tense].

they themselves would judge: Heb. וְהָיוּ שֹׁפְטִים; same as וְהָיוּ שֹׁפְטִים; and similarly [we find the verb וְהָיוּ שֹׁפְטִים], “neither shall you go away (וְהָיוּ שֹׁפְטִים)” (Ruth 2:8), like וְהָיוּ שֹׁפְטִים. The Targum [Onkelos] renders: וְהָיוּ שֹׁפְטִים, they judge. The earlier passages (verse 22) were in the imperative form. Therefore, they are rendered: וְהָיוּ שֹׁפְטִים, but these passages [here in verse 26] are expressions of doing [and are not imperative].

Kaplan Translation
NET Bible®

Moses listened to⁶³ his father-in-law and did everything he had said. Moses chose capable men from all Israel, and he made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. They judged the people under normal circumstances; the difficult cases they would bring⁶⁴ to Moses, but every small case they would judge themselves.

^{63tn} The idiom “listen to the voice of” means “obey, comply with, heed.”

^{64tn} This verb and the verb in the next clause are imperfect tenses. In the past tense narrative of the verse they must be customary, describing continuous action in past time.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and " Mosheh ^{Plucked out} heard the voice of his in-law and he did all which he said, and " Mosheh ^{Plucked out} chose men of force from all of " Yisra'el ^{He turns El aside} , and he gave them heads upon the people, nobles of thousands, nobles of hundreds, nobles of fifties and nobles of tens, and they will decide for the people <at all times>, they must [bring] the hard (matter)s to " Mosheh ^{Plucked out} , and they will decide all the small (matter)s themselves,...
Charles Thompson OT	So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he said. And when Moses had chosen able men from among all Israel and made them rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, and rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens, with orders to administer justice to the people on all occasions, and that they should lay before him the matter which was too high for them; but the causes easily determined they themselves should decide; then Moses gave his father in law leave to depart and he returned to his own land. V. 27 is included for context.
Modern English Version	So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything that he had said. Moses chose capable men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. They judged the people at all times. They brought the difficult cases to Moses, but they judged every small matter themselves.
New King James Version	So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. So they judged the people at all times; the hard [<i>difficult matters</i>] cases they brought to Moses, but they judged every small case themselves.
Young's Updated LT	And Moses hearkens to the voice of his father-in-law, and does all that he said, and Moses chooses men of ability out of all Israel, and makes them chiefs over the people, heads of thousands, heads of hundreds, heads of fifties, and heads of tens, and they have judged the people at all times; the hard matter they bring in unto Moses, and every small matter they judge themselves.

The gist of this passage: Moses pays attention to the suggestions of Jethro, and he sets up lower courts overseen by men of character who would settle all ordinary matters.

Exodus 18:24a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâma' (שמע) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
Mosheh (משה) [pronounced moh-SHEH]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by; on account of; about, concerning</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qôwl (קול) [pronounced kohl]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
chôthên (חתן) [pronounced khoh-THAIN]	<i>father-in-law, the wife's father</i>	Qal participle of verb; used as a substantive; masculine singular noun; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2859 BDB #368

Translation: Consequently, Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law...

Moses recognized that this was good advice and he took it.

Moses also knew his father-in-law, and recognized him as being a brilliant man.

Do not reject advice without considering it.

Exodus 18:24b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
‘âsâh (עשה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to produce, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

Exodus 18:24b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, kôl 'ăsher mean <i>all which, all whom, all that [which]; whomever, whatever, whatever else, all whose, all where, wherever.</i>			
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55

Translation: ...and he did all that he said.

Moses did all that his father-in-law suggested; it does not appear even that he modified anything.

Moses is a very sensible, intelligent man. Some men are too arrogant to listen to anyone else but themselves (I am using the word *man* in the generic sense). It doesn't matter if they are right or wrong or if their opinion has changed a dozen times; they will not listen to anyone else—not their spouses, their bosses, those below them, their parents, their children, their in-laws or their friends. Now certainly, there are a lot of people whose advice is nearly worthless. Being grace-oriented does not mean that you go out on the street like some reporter and solicit the stupid opinions of the masses. Any thinking person realizes that is generally a terrific waste of time. However, there are situations where we would do well to listen to others and Moses recognizes this. Moses recognizes that this is good advice; and he follows it. Note that he does not even have to run to God in prayer to get God's okay to make this decision.

Moses is spiritually mature. He recognizes things which fall into God's plan and things which do not. We have to make thousands of decisions each day. When God's Word is resident inside of us, we do not have necessarily need to pray about it, call our pastor up and bother him, consult our astrologer, etc. God's Word allows us to recognize that which falls within His will and that is all that Moses is doing. He recognizes the wisdom of his father-in-law and he runs with it.

Moses has the humility to hear a good suggestion and to take it.

Jethro may have thought that he had come to bring Moses' wife and children to him; but it turns out that God uses him to streamline the system of judgment in place.

An application of Jethro's suggestion: When studying a chapter from any book in the Bible, I end up producing three documents. The one that I begin with is a word-by-word chapter study, going back to the original Greek or Hebrew, and then writing three translations based upon the original language. This document has a unique feature which was the result of someone who offered me a criticism of my exegetical approach to the Scriptures. When I first began to exegete the Bible, I might spend a paragraph or two writing, *and this is the Qal imperfect of this particular verb, followed by the direct object of this noun, which means...* I do not recall exactly what my friend told me, but it was a complaint about these paragraphs filled with many references to the Hebrew and he didn't like it. Now, I did it that way because this is the presentation I heard in Bible class from R. B. Thieme, Jr. However, the difference is, I am committing this material to writing, and his teaching was verbal. Sometimes a document better presents material in table form. My friend helped me to realize this by his criticisms.

What I decided on, not too long after Alex gave me his criticism, was the Hebrew exegesis tables that you see in the **Exodus 18** study. ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). Most people who study from my notes (and the collection of the works of others) typically skip over this table and move into the written material. However, these tables are absolutely necessary for two reasons: (1) they help me develop a good translation set (I develop my translation apart from viewing any other translation). These tables are essential to the development of a good translation set (I produce three translations for every verse). (2) A reader may question my translation; or question my interpretation of a passage, so this table is immediately available to assist him in his critical examination of whatever it is that I have written. Having these Hebrew exegesis tables readily available, it makes it easy for a critic to consider, “Kukis has given this translation, and these other 5 translations differ; how can I make an informed choice here?” These tables are right here for such a person to peruse and consider. After all, these tables are essentially the basis for most of the commentary that I write.

In the back of your mind, you may be wondering, *what three documents?* Maybe you are wondering, *what three translations?*

What three documents?		
The Book of Exodus	The Weekly Study of Exodus	The Chapter Study of Exodus
This is a single document. When I complete ¹⁶ it, it will have a verse-by-verse examination of the entire book of Exodus.	The weekly study is stitched together to form 4–7 documents on Exodus (each document has 100 lessons)	Each chapter of Exodus is a separate document
The summary referenced to the right becomes the basic verse-by-verse exegesis given in each chapter.	When I complete a chapter, I will summarize the entire chapter. You may have noticed that I spend 1–4 lessons summarizing each chapter.	This summary of a chapter is placed at the end of the overall document, in the chapter summary at the end of each chapter.
When I complete a chapter, I go back and review that chapter. All of these reviews are placed into a single document. Doing these chapter reviews is a recent development. Some of my full book studies were done decades ago. (It took me over a decade to work out this system here.)	I send out a weekly lesson of material which I write, rewrite, and rewrite several more times. Each weekly installment is 4–5 pages and sometimes I send out a double lesson (7–11 pages). These are completed literally the day that they are sent out.	This is the super-document, if you will. Each chapter contains the material in the previous two columns, along with: selections from 90 ¹⁷ translations, three original translations based upon Greek or Hebrew tables of every word, a dictionary of terms, two final sections with additional material; and two of the translations are placed at the end on their own without commentary.
I saw that, no matter how much work I put into the other two documents, I had a great number of people accessing the single document of the book of Exodus (which I originally planned to phase out). I decided to improve it rather than to toss it.	I saw that some people wanted a reasonably in depth study but without all of the Greek and Hebrew words. Also, some people like having each lesson being <i>bite-sized</i> (that is, something that can be read in 10–20 minutes.	Some people want everything right there at their fingertips in a single document. The previous two documents are a subset of the chapter study.

¹⁶ It is actually complete, but I will update it every time I complete a chapter in Exodus.

¹⁷ 100+ translations for the New Testament.

Typically, each chapter is around 10 pages long.	Typically each document contains 100 lessons and is around 450 pages long. Each group of 100 lessons may contain four or five chapters.	Each chapter study is typically 100–500 pages long. One document = one chapter.
This short document is designed for someone who wants a quick overall view of a book or chapter.	This approach is made for those who want a more in-depth study.	Each chapter study is designed for pastors, seminary students, Sunday school teachers or those who want a super in-depth study.
(HTML) (PDF) (WPD) (Folder)	(HTML) (PDF) (WPD) (Folder)	(HTML) (PDF) (WPD) (Folder)
Links are to this single document.	Links are to the first 100 lessons of Exodus. That lesson set has links to all the other lesson sets.	Those are links are to a single document (like a table of contents) that links to every chapter of the book covered.

The weekly lessons for Genesis are complete; the weekly lessons for Exodus and Luke are ongoing. There is additional material on other books found at www.kukis.org

When Exodus and Luke are completed, I will work on lessons in Leviticus and Acts. My website has many more books exegeted word-by-word, verse-by-verse, chapter-by-chapter.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

I have actually never explained my thinking behind the three English translations which I come up with for each verse.

What Three Translations?

When I began this project of translating and writing commentary for the Scriptures, I had no idea how far I would be able to go. But early on, I was stumped with how to translate each verse. Just how literal should I make the translation? And if I make a super-literal translation, would it be understandable? Very early on, I began writing two translations. One translation would be very literal, preserving word order where possible, including definite articles when called for, and preserving singular and plural nouns where they were found. The other would be very literal, but with an attempt at appealing to the sensibilities and conventions of English grammar. Soon thereafter, I came across the problem of giving a good literal translation, which was hard to understand; and playing with the language enough to give a less literal but more understandable translation.

Hence; three translations:

Kukis slavishly literal	I try to maintain word order if possible, singular and plural nouns and adjectives; and if there is a definite article, then I insert an English definite article.
Kukis moderately literal or Kukis mostly literal translation:	Greek, Hebrew and English all have their own peculiarities when it comes to sentence structure and the use of singular and plural nouns. In the slavishly literal translation, I made the English conform to the Greek and Hebrew; in the mostly literal translation, I made the Greek and Hebrew conform to English convention and syntax.
Kukis paraphrase:	I have given myself a rather free hand here. I determine what I believe the text is conveying, and then I try to convey that meaning without being concerned about maintaining a word-for-word (or short phrase-for-word) translation.

What Three Translations?

Although I could come up with designations for these translations without using my last name, there was always the possibility that some translator or translation group would also end up using that title, thereby causing some confusion in the future. I could be pretty much certain that no one would use *Kukis* when giving a name to a translation. That seemed like a simple fix.

In the beginning, I had no idea how many people would read these writings. I began writing in 1995. At that time, I don't recall if I knew what a website was; nor did I imagine having one. By the time began to use the internet regularly, I realized that posting this work on the internet would be the best way of going about this. I was not looking to gain money; I was not ever going to ask for an offering; and I wanted to post without advertising.

I found it much easier and more freeing to put together three translations rather than one. This way, I rarely wrestle with the problem, *this way is more literal* as over against *this way is more understandable*. Because the Greek and Hebrew tables are right there with the translations, one can compare my translation with the original language.

[Chapter Outline](#)

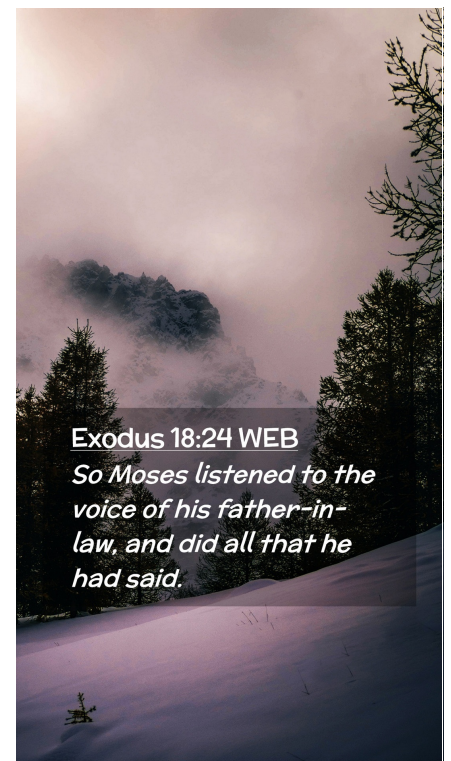
[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Exodus 18:24 [Consequently, Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and he did all that he said.](#) (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Moses has a high opinion of his father-in-law and he was able to recognize good advice when he heard it. Therefore, Moses will take this man's advice. The key here to Moses' character is humility. Not at any point does he stop Jethro and say, "Listen, you're just a priest out there in Midian with a boatload of daughters. God put me in charge of an entire nation here!" You or I may have responded that way to Jethro's advice; but Moses listens Jethro and accepts the wisdom in it.

Application: Don't misunderstand me. I am not saying that every person who speaks to you has a special secret message from God; or that everyone has good advice. I am saying, there are times for you to listen; and doctrinally oriented believers should be able to recognize good advice (or accept reasonable criticism).

Exodus 18:24 (WEB) (a graphic); from [Scripture Images](#); accessed July 19, 2023.



Exodus 18:25a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bâchar (בָּחַר) [pronounced baw-KHAHR]	<i>to choose; Gesenius also lists to prove, to try, to examine, to approve, to choose, to select; to love, to delight in [something], to desire</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #977 BDB #103
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced moh-SHEH]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
ʾănâshîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced uh-NAW-sheem]; ʾiyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced ee-SHEEM]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers; some of the men</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
chayil (חַיִל) [pronounced CHAH-yil]	<i>army, force; strength, courage, power, might; efficiency; ability and that which is gotten through strength—wealth, substance</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2428 BDB #298
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
Literally, min kôl (כֹּל מִן) [pronounced mihn-kohl] means, <i>from all, from every</i> . However, together, various literal translations give the following renderings: <i>about all, of all</i> (1Sam. 23:23); <i>over all, more than all, above all</i> (Gen. 3:14).			
Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	<i>God prevails; contender; soldier of God; transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun; God-given name to Jacob; and national name for the Jewish people	Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975

Translation: Moses chose men of ability from all Israel...

Moses chose men of strength, authority and ability from Israel. He knew those who were dependable.

What Moses was doing is giving authority to others to judge in his stead.

The first thing that Moses does is choose those who are spiritually mature, who are honest and have integrity, and he sets up a hierarchy of authority. This change in the structure of their government was a precedent which lasted

well into the days of the judges (during which time, some of these judges overlapped in time, as they did not judge over all of Israel at any time).

Exodus 18:25b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נתן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>them; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to them, toward them</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
râ'shîym (רָשָׁיִם) [pronounced raw-SHEEM]	<i>heads, princes, officers, captains, chiefs; company, band, division</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #7218 BDB #910
'al (עַל) [pronounced ġah/]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
'am (עַם) [pronounced ġahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

Translation: ...and he made them heads over the people—...

These men were given authority over various groups of people. Right from the beginning, Moses established an authority structure. Let me suggest that the discussion and advice was much more detailed than is found here. One of the things to consider is, the people were used to Moses being in charge. What would stop the losing party from saying, in virtually every case, "I appeal to Moses!"? That would put Moses right back into it. Therefore, some sort of structure was set up which involved some sort of appellant system. This is what we find established below.

Exodus 18:25c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
sar (שַׂר) [pronounced sar]	<i>chieftain, chief, ruler, official, captain, prince, leader, commander</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #8269 BDB #978
'ălâpîhîym (אַלְפִיִּים) pronounced uh-law-FEEM]	<i>thousands, families, [military] units</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #505 (and #504) BDB #48

Exodus 18:25c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
sar (סַר) [pronounced sar]	chieftain, chief, ruler, official, captain, prince, leader, commander	masculine plural construct	Strong's #8269 BDB #978
mê'ôwth (מֵאוֹת) [pronounced may-OHTH]	hundreds	feminine plural construct; numeral	Strong's #3967 BDB #547
sar (סַר) [pronounced sar]	chieftain, chief, ruler, official, captain, prince, leader, commander	masculine plural construct	Strong's #8269 BDB #978
chămishîym (חֲמִשִּׁים) [pronounced khuh-mih-SHEEM]	fifty, fifties	plural numeral	Strong's #2572 BDB #332
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
sar (סַר) [pronounced sar]	chieftain, chief, ruler, official, captain, prince, leader, commander	masculine plural construct	Strong's #8269 BDB #978
'asârâh (עֲשָׂרִים) [pronounced gah-saw-RAW]	ten	feminine plural numeral	Strong's #6235 BDB #796

This is taken directly from v. 21.

Translation: ...officials of thousands, officials of hundreds, officials of fifties and officials over tens.

I believe that the precise nature of the system used is not fully explained here, as there is no particular system of government which the Bible recommends. Today, it is important that the government preserve our safety and our freedoms.

As I would understand this is, over several thousand people, there would be a ruler; and over hundreds of people there would be another ruler under the authority of the first set of rulers; and over fifties rulers who are subject to the first two rulers. This is not unlike our system of city, state and federal officials. Perhaps the tens refers to some sort of appellant system, such as being over ten judges or ten courts. It makes less sense to me for one man to be over ten (or twenty or thirty) people.

Or is this a way to simply designate systematic, organized authority without spelling out exactly what that system is?

Throughout the Age of Israel there are a variety of forms of government; but key to the proper function of any government is the spiritual condition of the people. If the people are corrupt, then the government over them will be corrupt.

At this point in time, Israel could not have a better ruler than Moses. He is incorruptible and a man dedicated to God. However, the people themselves are very corruptible so that they will not advance spiritually as they should. The people of Israel do not realize, but in their near future, they will receive the Law, which will guide them for the

next 1500 years. Then God will then take them to the border of their land, but they will fail there. As a result, they will languish in the desert for 40 years while one generation dies the sin unto death (this will take us to the final chapter of Deuteronomy).

Exodus 18:25 *Moses chose men of ability from all Israel and he made them heads over the people—officials of thousands, officials of hundreds, officials of fifties and officials over tens.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Moses sets up a very organized system of authorities. It was not going to be people, a few hundred authorities and then Moses. The structure was going to be more complex than that. Moses cannot simply be the second and final authority. So a structure—a system of authorities, if you will—was set up in between him and the people.

Exodus 18:26a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâphaṭ (שָׁפַט) [pronounced <i>shaw-FAHT</i>]	<i>to judge, to condemn, to punish; to defend [especially the poor and oppressed], to defend [one's cause] and deliver him from his enemies; to rule, to govern</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #8199 BDB #1047
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'am (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
kôl (כָּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
Literally, <i>in all</i> . Although I don't have this in the lexicons, it is rendered by the most literal translations as <i>among all, through all, throughout all, with all</i> .			
'êth (עֵת) [pronounced <i>gayth</i>]	<i>time, the right time, the time proper ; opportunity</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #6256 BDB #773

Translation: [These men] would judge the people all of the time.

These men would be in charge of judging the people. Every case would come before them.

Exodus 18:26b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
’êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAWR</i>]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command; business, occupation; case; something; manner</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
qâsheh (קָשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>kaw-SHEH</i>]	<i>hard, severe, difficult, fierce, intense, vehement, stiff, harsh, hardened, stubborn; heavy; powerful, strong</i>	masculine singular adjective/noun with the definite article	Strong's #7186 BDB #904
bôw’ (אוּב) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to take in, to bring [near, against, upon], to come in with, to carry, to cause to come [in], to gather, to bring to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
’el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602

Translation: They [still] brought the difficult cases to Moses,...

If they believed that a case was too difficult or too important, then they brought those cases to Moses.

Qâsheh (קָשֶׁה) [pronounced *kaw-SHEH*] means *hard, severe, difficult*; it has a variety of applications which are determined by context. This is a case where the men of integrity judging the matter realize that they cannot make a determination that they are comfortable with so they bring it to Moses. This is not a case that necessarily involves more money or greater damage but it involves greater jurisprudence and greater wisdom. A man of integrity is not afraid to go to his superior for guidance or to allow those over him to handle something which is outside his area of expertise or beyond his ability to judge correctly.

So, the way I read this is, a case does not go to Moses simply because one of the parties appeals it. It appears that a judge may make this decision.

Exodus 18:26c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Exodus 18:26c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command; business, occupation; case; something; manner</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
qâṭân (קָטָן) [pronounced kaw-TAWN]	<i>small, young, unimportant, insignificant</i>	masculine singular adjective; with the definite article	Strong's #6996 BDB #881
shâphaṭ (שָׁפַט) [pronounced shaw-FAHT]	<i>to judge, to condemn, to punish; to defend [especially the poor and oppressed], to defend [one's cause] and deliver him from his enemies; to rule, to govern</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8199 BDB #1047
hêm (הֵם) [pronounced haym]	<i>they, those; themselves; these [with the definite article]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #1992 BDB #241
This is the exact same wording as v. 22.			

Translation: ...but they judged the small cases themselves.

However, the majority of the cases involved small, easy-to-adjudicate matters. These authorities, as set up by Moses, handled those cases.

Exodus 18:26 [These men] would judge the people all of the time. They [still] brought the difficult cases to Moses, but they judged the small cases themselves. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Bear in mind that the Law has not been given yet. Were they expecting a law to be given? Were these primarily disputes between people? My read of this is, the people do not know what is coming; and most that is being judged is one person complaining about mistreatment of some sort by one of his neighbors.

Exodus 18:24–26 Consequently, Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and he did all that he said. Moses chose men of ability from all Israel and he made them heads over the people—officials of thousands, officials of hundreds, officials of fifties and officials over tens. [These men] would judge the people all of the time. They [still] brought the difficult cases to Moses, but they judged the small cases themselves. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 18:24–26 Consequently, Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and he did all that he suggested. Moses chose men of ability from all Israel and he gave them authority over the people. He organized these officials to be over specific groups and they would do nearly all of the adjudication. If a case was difficult, then they would bring it to Moses. However, they judged the less difficult cases themselves. (Kukis paraphrase)

And so sends Moses his father-in-law and so he goes for him unto his [own] land.	Exodus 18:27	Moses [later] sent his father-in-law away, and he went to his [own] country.
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Moses later sent his father-in-law away, so Jethro returned to his own land.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so sends Moses his father-in-law and so he goes for him unto his [own] land.
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Mosheh sent his father in law away, and he went unto his land.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Mosheh parted from his father in law, and he went, and himself made proselytes of all the children of his land.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And he let his kinsman depart: and he returned and went into his own country.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Mosha let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way into his own land.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went to his own lan.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And Moses dismissed his father-in-law, and he returned to his own land.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Moses let his father-in-law go away, and he went back to his land.
Easy English	Then Moses said goodbye to his wife's father and Jethro returned to his own country.
Easy-to-Read Version–2001	After a short time, Moses said goodbye to his father-in-law Jethro. And Jethro went back to his own home.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	.
<i>The Message</i>	Then Moses said good-bye to his father-in-law who went home to his own country.
NIRV	.
New Simplified Bible	Moses said good-bye to Jethro, and Jethro went back home.

Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	After Moses and his father-in-law Jethro had said good-by to each other, Jethro returned home.
The Living Bible	Soon afterwards Moses let his father-in-law return to his own land.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	.
New Living Translation	Soon after this, Moses said good-bye to his father-in-law, who returned to his own land.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	After that, Moses [said goodbye] to his father-in-law, and [His Excellence] returned to his own land.
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	And so he took leave of his father-in-law, who now went back to his own country.
Translation for Translators	Then Moses/I said goodbye to his/my father-in-law, and Jethro returned home.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia Translation	Moses then dismissed his father-in-law, who went back to his own land.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Moses afterwards took leave of his father-in-law went to his own country.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.
HCSB	Then Moses said good-bye to his father-in-law, and he journeyed to his own land.
Unlocked Literal Bible	Then Moses let his father-in-law leave, and Jethro went back into his own land.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Moses sent his father in law, and he walked off to his land.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And Moses sent his father in law away, and he walked his way into his own land.
New American Bible (2011)	Then Moses said farewell to his father-in-law, who went off to his own country.
New Jerusalem Bible	Moses then set his father-in-law on his way, and he travelled back to his own country.
Revised English Bible—1989	When his father-in-law went back to his own country, Moses set him on his way.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Then Moshe let his father-in-law leave, and he went off to his own country.
exeGesés companion Bible	And Mosheh sends his in law away; and he goes his way into his own land.

Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	AND MOSES SENT FORTH HIM [his father in law] AND HE RETURNED TO HIS OWN LAND.
Awful Scroll Bible	Moses, of he being the son-in-law of, was to be sent off, even was he to depart to his solid grounds.
Concordant Literal Version	Then Moses dismissed his father-in-law; so he went by himself to his land.
exeGesés companion Bible	.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Moshe let his khoten depart; and he went his way into his own land.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then Moses said goodbye to his father-in-law [Lit <i>sent off his father-in-law</i>], and Jethro went back to his own land (Midian).
The Expanded Bible	So Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro went back to his own ·home [·land].
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Moses let his father-in-law depart; and he went his way into his own land. He returned home a convert to the God of Israel, and it was doubtless due to his influence that at least a part of his people journeyed to Canaan with Moses' brother-in-law, Num. 10:29.
The Voice	When it was time for Jethro to return to his own land, Moses sent his father-in-law on his way.

Bible Translations with an Excess of Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach	Moses saw his father in law off, and he went away to his land. and he went away to his land: to convert the members of his family. — [from Mechilta]
Kaplan Translation	Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went away to his homeland. <i>he went away...</i>

NET Bible®

See Numbers 10:29-32.

Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way,⁶⁵ and so Jethro⁶⁶ went⁶⁷ to his own land.⁶⁸

^{65tn} The verb וַיִּשְׁלַח (vayshallakh) has the same root and same stem used in the passages calling for Pharaoh to “release” Israel. Here, in a peaceful and righteous relationship, Moses sent Jethro to his home.

^{66tn} Heb “he”; the referent (Jethro) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

^{67tn} The prepositional phrase included here Gesenius classifies as a pleonastic dativus ethicus to give special emphasis to the significance of the occurrence in question for a particular subject (GKC 381 §119.s).

^{68sn} This chapter makes an excellent message on spiritual leadership of the people of God. Spiritually responsible people are to be selected to help in the work of the ministry (teaching, deciding cases, meeting needs), so that there will be peace, and so that leaders will not be exhausted. Probably capable people are more ready to do that than leaders are ready to relinquish control. But leaders have to be willing to take the risk, to entrust the task to others. Here Moses is the model of humility, receiving correction and counsel from Jethro. And Jethro is the ideal adviser, for he has no intention of remaining there to run the operation.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans.	...and " Mosheh ^{Plucked out} sent his in-law, and he walked himself, to his land,...
English Standard Version	Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went away to his own country.
Green’s Literal Translation	And Moses sent his father-in-law away, and he went to his own land.
New American Standard B.	Then Moses bade his father-in-law farewell [Lit <i>sent off his father-in-law</i>], and he went his way into his own land.
Young’s Updated LT	And Moses sends his father-in-law away, and he goes away unto his own land.

The gist of this passage: Moses sent his father-in-law back to his land.

Exodus 18:27a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i>]	<i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong’s #7971 BDB #1018
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong’s #4872 BDB #602
’êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong’s #853 BDB #84
chôthên (כֹּהֵן) [pronounced <i>khoh-THAIN</i>]	<i>father-in-law, the wife’s father</i>	Qal participle of verb; used as a substantive; masculine singular noun; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong’s #2859 BDB #368

Translation: Moses [later] sent his father-in-law away,...

The NKJV and others translate that *Moses let his father-in-law depart*. In a way this is true, but it distorts the issue.

I don't believe that we should understand this to mean that Moses woke up one day and decided, I don't want my father-in-law around, so I am going to send him away. Moses is the ruler of the Hebrew people. He was like Pharaoh to them. So, they came and went as he ordered. For Jethro to return home, he needed to be ordered to go by Moses. Recall that Jethro had six other daughters and a business to run, so, as much as he might want to remain, he asked to be returned to his home.

The 3rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect of *shâlach* (שָׁלַח) [pronounced *shaw-LAKH*] means *to release, to discharge, to give over, to cast out, to send away, to dismiss*. The Qal stem means merely *to send, to send forth*. The Piel is the intensive stem, which suggests that Moses issued the order for Jethro to depart. Moses is the leader of these 2,000,000 and it is proper protocol for him to issue orders and mandates.

Exodus 18:27b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by; on account of; about, concerning</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i>]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #776 BDB #75

Translation: ...and he went to his [own] country.

Jethro returns to his own home.

This is somewhat sad, because I would guess that, had he wanted to, Jethro could have remained with the people of Israel under Moses' authority. However, he chose to return home. Obviously, he had a great many responsibilities there to his large family.

Furthermore, there is very little intermingling between the Jews and other groups. A considerable number of wives have apparently come from outside Jacob's line. Joseph, quite obviously, would have married an Egyptian woman. Moses has married a Midianite woman. But what we do not have is another race in large numbers joining in with the Jews (you may recall that this was more or less suggested by a family of Hivites back in Genesis 34).

Speaking of wives, you may wonder about the wife of Moses. We never hear about her again. Her spiritual life was pathetic and she had nothing to offer Moses and gave him no reason to record another word about her. How sad that she became this small in his eyes. His children, and probably her, remained with Moses, as they and their descendants are mentioned in 1Chron. 23:15–17. The children (unnamed) will be mentioned by God at a later time.

Exodus 18:27 **Moses [later] sent his father-in-law away, and he went to his [own] country.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

We all have a place where we belong. Jethro, a great unknown hero from the book of Exodus, has his place in Midian. Therefore, he is going to return there. He had come for the specific reason of bringing his daughter and her two sons back to Moses. He made a brilliant observation which had eluded the brilliant Moses; and this suggestion allowed Moses much greater freedom as leader over the Israelites.

You may recall that Jethro has many daughters and a large sheep business. Furthermore, he is a priest (perhaps over just his own family; perhaps over more). So he returns to his life in Midian.

Again, no additional information is given to us about Moses' wife or sons. She is with the Israelites and probably in close proximity with Moses; but Moses needs to advance and lead despite her influence.

One of the important points that we may take from Exodus 18 is, not only do the people of Israel need an organized legal system, but they need a law to go with this. Up to this point in time, Moses has been pretty much ruling by the seat of his pants. He was a good and fair judge; but he essentially made rulings based upon the Egyptian law that he had learned (while being prepared to become the Pharaoh of Egypt) along with his spiritual sensibilities. God will want Israel to have a more definitive law than this.

Exodus 18:27 **Moses later sent his father-in-law away, so Jethro returned to his own land.** (Kukis paraphrase)

Beginning of Document	Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines
Introduction and Text	First Verse	Addendum
www.kukis.org	Exodus folder	Exegetical Studies in Exodus

A Set of Summary Doctrines and Commentary

The idea here is, there are things which we find in this chapter which are extremely important.

Why Exodus 18 is in the Word of God

1. T
- 2.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

These are things which we learn while studying this particular chapter.

What We Learn from Exodus 18

1. T

What We Learn from Exodus 18

2.

[Chapter Outline](#)

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Many chapters of the Bible look forward to Jesus Christ in some way or another. A person or situation might foreshadow the Lord or His work on the cross (or His reign over Israel in the Millennium). The chapter may contain a prophecy about the Lord or it may, in some way, lead us toward the Lord (for instance, by means of genealogy).

Jesus Christ in Exodus 18

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

A Brief Review of Exodus 18:

The basic Bible text for this section will be the Hebraic Roots Bible (any other translation used will be specifically noted). The HRB is an Old and New Testament translation ©Copyright Word of Truth Publications, 2009; Congregation of YHWH, Jerusalem. This background would suggest that these are Jewish Christians. If there is only an Old Testament which uses many Hebraisms, then the translation is the work of Jewish scholars (examples: the Complete Tanach; the Kaplan Translation, the Tanakh—1985). If a translation with Hebraisms has both the Old and New Testament, then, obviously, there are Jewish Christians involved (examples: the Complete Jewish Bible, the Exegesis Companion Bible¹⁸, the Hebraic Roots Bible, Orthodox Jewish Bible, The Scriptures 2009, Tree of Life Version). The whole idea, of course, is to appeal to the Jewish reader, whether Christian or not (many of our Jewish brothers and sisters are Christians).

There is at least one Jewish Bible which is the New Testament only (the Holy New Covenant Translation).

If you read only the Old Testament translation, then, generally speaking, you cannot tell whether the translators are Christian or not. Most organizations which attempt to translate the Old Testament, the New Testament or both, do not necessarily come with a theological point of view built into the text (even though you would think that there would be).

One of the remarkable things which I have discovered are the many similarities between Catholic approved translations and Jewish translations (whether Christian or not). In the chapter studies that I do, I feature selections from about 90+ translations for my Old Testament work. At some point, many years ago, it seemed like a good idea to group the Catholic-approved translations together and the Jewish-name translations together. I have these two sections placed together, one above the other. Apart from the Hebraisms, one would be hard-pressed to find any remarkable differences between these two sections of translations. If you would like to see this for yourself, the links to Exodus 18: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). You can look at every verse or passage, and read these two sections, and see that the sense of the Catholic Bible is no different from the Hebrew Bible. That is, you will never read a verse in the first group and say, "That sure sounds like a Catholic way of looking at things." Similarly, when you read from the second group of translations, you will never remark, "It really seems that, theologically speaking, these Jewish translators are trying to make a point."

¹⁸ The ECB provides the closest thing that I have seen to the Hebrew grammatical structure.

With regards to the Hebraic Roots Bible, there are only a few words which may be different from what you are used to:

Although many believers recognize the words on the left, not all do.

Table for Hebraic Roots Bible

Hebraic Roots Bible	More Common designation	Additional comments
YAHWEH	Jehovah	The HRB is likely more accurate than <i>Jehovah</i> .
Elohe	God	This is <i>God</i> in the singular
Elohim	God	This is God in the plural (–im is the mark of the plural in the Hebrew)
Elohim	gods	There should not be an s added to the –im ending in the Hebrew, but they do it anyway
Torah	Law, Mosaic Law, books of the Law	Like the other words, <i>torah</i> is simply a transliteration

Very often, a *Hebrew Names Bible* simply transliterates a number of Hebrew words. In the HRB, there are only a handful; in the Orthodox Jewish Bible, there are a lot.

Key to Exodus 18 is Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, who lives in Midian. It turns out that Jethro is not too far from where Moses and the people of Israel are in the desert-wilderness. Therefore, he drops in on Moses, bringing with him Moses' wife and two sons. Most of this chapter is going to be about Moses and Jethro interacting.

Having read and worked on this chapter over a period of several years (not nonstop, mind you), I wonder if there are things that are necessary in this chapter which move us right along to what God has planned for Moses? That is, perhaps Jethro coming up to see Moses was an important step in Moses' spiritual maturation.

Jethro is going to observe Moses on the job, and he is going to say, "Listen, you can't continue to do things this way. Here is what I advise..."

Moses could listen and take Jethro's advice (this would be the grace oriented response), or Moses could say, "Listen, God put me in charge of this nation of two million people, not you; so maybe I have a better idea about what how do do things. You think?" That would have been the response of arrogance.

One of the most important things that a leader can have is grace orientation. Leadership is not, *I'm the toughest, meanest, most stubborn man here, so what I say goes!!* Moses certainly has to be tough; but he also has to be grace oriented. We learn a great deal about leadership dynamics through Moses.

Jethro's Advice (this is the only heading for this chapter)

Exodus 18:1 **And Jethro the priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses, heard all that which Elohim had done for Moses and for His people Israel, that YAHWEH had caused Israel to go out from Egypt.** (Hebraic Roots Bible)

Moses, when he first left (escaped) Egypt, he went to Midian. Moses knew geography; it was a part of his training. So, in order to cleanly escape, he did not just take off running. He likely knew where he was going, and believed this to be the safest place to go.

In his training to become Pharaoh, Moses would be aware of how to get to any nearby country; and he would have known about the country's interactions with Egypt; and he would have known things about that country's society, customs, language, military force, etc. This information guided Moses in choosing a destination for his escape.

Moses first met Jethro's daughters, and then he met Jethro. He married one of Jethro's daughters (probably the eldest, as that is how things were often done).

I suspect that Moses' marriage was much different than what he was expecting.

Exodus 18:2–4 *And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, (after Moses had sent her away), and her two sons, one's name was Gershom (for he said, I have become an alien in a foreign land;) and one's name was Eliezer (for the Elohe of my father was my Help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh).* (HRB)

Moses married Zipporah (= *flighty*) and they had two sons. Although she began to come back to Egypt with Moses, she had to circumcise her youngest adult son and that apparently soured her on the relationship and this new adventure. At some point, she returned to Midian. Maybe right after the circumcision; maybe a few weeks later.

Although the text of this translation reads *after Moses had sent her away*, we previously studied this in great depth. That is not what the Hebrew text reads. Based upon her reaction to having to circumcise their second son, Zipporah seems to have been quite upset. Therefore, it is more likely that she simply up and left Moses, under the theme, "I don't need to put up with this."

A few months transpired, during which Moses was used by God to bring Israel out of Egypt. When this had been accomplished, Jethro began to receive reports of all that had been taking place (probably from trading caravans).

As Moses led the people through the desert-wilderness, he came closer and closer to Midian. This was not by means of Moses, but God. God led the people through the desert-wilderness through a very visible pillar of fire at night and pillar of cloud by day. Moses knew where they were, but he was very much following God's lead.

Jethro, hearing that Moses was not far from him, gathered up Zipporah and the two sons (who could have been in their 30s by this time¹⁹) and he brought them to Moses. Apart from a mention of the sons in the Chronicles genealogy, this family will not be mentioned again. Not by their names, anyway.

As an aside, this suggests a very interesting principle: Moses is the greatest Jew of his era (one of the greatest men in Israel's history). However, his sons are, by the Biblical account, unremarkable. It takes two people of character to raise great children. The influence of the wife cannot be understated. However, this is simply an implied principle. This chapter is not really about the reuniting of Moses and his family.

The rest of this chapter will be about Jethro, a family priest, and his son-in-law Moses.

Exodus 18:5 *And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, and his sons and his wife came to Moses, to the wilderness where he camped, at the mount of Elohim.* (HRB)

Jethro knew where Moses and the Israelites were. They were not difficult to find. There are two million people in a desert-wilderness. He and his family camped nearby and Jethro sent a messenger to Moses.

The message sent to Moses is v. 6:

Exodus 18:6 *And he said to Moses, I, your father-in-law Jethro, and your wife, and your two sons with her have come to you.* (HRB)

¹⁹ Remember that Moses arrived in Midian about 40 years previous.

What may not be clear by the words used is, Jethro first sent a messenger to Moses to let him know that he was nearby, and he had his wife and two sons with him. This would have been proper protocol. We know that this is a message and not Moses' father-in-law saying this directly to Moses. Moses has only been out of Midian for a few months so he would recognize his father-in-law and family.

Moses could have sent a messenger back saying, "Listen, too busy now; take the woman back with you. I have got too much on my plate."

Sometimes, we lose a sense of time is lost when studying a few chapters. This is Moses' family and he has spent the last 40 years with them (I am including Jethro as a part of his family). Moses has been leading Israel for maybe two or three months (this is going all the way back to when he first returned to Egypt). Despite having actual blood family members there in the desert-wilderness (Aaron and Miriam), Moses has had almost no contact with them over the past 80 years (recall that he was brought up in the Egyptian palace, away from his family). As far as Moses is concerned, his real family has just come to see him. Moses is very happy to meet with them. Moses has the messenger lead him to where Jethro is camped.

Exodus 18:7 **And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and bowed, and kissed him. And they asked each other his neighbor, as to their welfare. And they [Moses and Jethro] entered the tent.** (HRB)

Moses was very glad that his father-in-law had come to him. Moses did not send for them to be brought to him; Moses immediately went out where they were camped. This would indicate that Moses really wanted to see them all (however, Moses will spend most of his time with Jethro and not with his wife and kids).

It is Moses who bows before his father-in-law, not the other way around.

Moses calls himself the most grace oriented man on earth (Numbers 12:3), and we know that is true, as he wrote under the power of the Holy Spirit (2Peter 1:21). There are several things in this chapter which reveal to us just how grace oriented Moses was. Bowing before his father-in-law is clearly an act of grace orientation. Moses does not come into Jethro's field of vision and say, "I am like a king here, so you bow to me!"

Moses and Jethro Talk in the Tent (by James Jacques Joseph Tissot) (French artist, 1836-1902); from the [Jewish Museum](#); accessed August 9, 2023.

Exodus 18:8 **And Moses told his father-in-law all that YAHWEH had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt on account of Israel, all the trouble which they had found in the way, and YAHWEH had delivered them.** (HRB)

Everything that we have been reading and studying, going back perhaps to Exodus 7 or so and up to the end of Exodus 17, is all that Moses told Jethro. This is the first time that Moses could share this information with someone that he was close to.

Moses had a 40-year relationship with Jethro; and Moses had been leading Israel only for a few months. Being able to see his father-in-law in the midst of all this was a real treat.



Exodus 18:9 **And Jethro rejoiced regarding all the good which YAHWEH had done to Israel whom He had delivered from the hand of Egypt.** (HRB)

Jethro recognizes that this was divine good that was taking place, God delivering Israel from the control of Egypt.

One of the reasons that we know Jethro to be a mature believer is, he is able to see contemporary history through the eyes of God. That is, Jethro has divine viewpoint; and is able to apply this to what he hears and sees.

Contrast this with some of the malcontents in Israel who claim that they were better off in slavery (Exodus 15:24 16:3 17:3). What would have been divine viewpoint? "Blessed You are, O God, for sending Moses to deliver us from slavery in Egypt." But how many times have we heard those sentiments expressed among the Israelites? Never?

Being on the internet and listening to a Christian radio station at times (as well as to National Public Radio), and it is clear that some people can look at the things taking place in the United States and understand why they are happening; and others cannot. NPR almost never understands or correctly interprets current events (many times, this is intentional). However, there are many Christians who do not have a clue either. On the one hand, it is clear that the number of believers is decreasing in the United States; as are the number of mature believers. This would tell us the we are in for strong discipline as a nation (which discipline is taking place already). However, national discipline does not mean that these are signs of a soon-coming rapture.

I recall a Christian radio ministry headed by a very intelligent, knowledgeable man who, at some point, decided to predict the day of the rapture. If memory serves, he predicted this day at least twice. This was a man who should have known better, and his foolishness became fodder for Christian critics. This man became an embarrassment; and because this was on the radio, his foolish predictions were well known. God had given him a very important ministry, and he squandered it in the end.

Returning to our narrative, let's see what Jethro says about the recent events that Moses has just related to him:

Exodus 18:10 **And Jethro said, Blessed be YAHWEH Who has delivered you from the hand of Egypt, and from the hand of Pharaoh; He who delivered the people from under the hand of Egypt.** (HRB; capitalized)

Jethro blesses or celebrates what Y^ehowah has done. He seems to have a better grasp of what has taken place than the Israelites who were delivered by God. They actually saw all that God did with their own eyes, and yet they did not appreciate it. Jethro is hearing about this from Moses, and he fully understands and believes what has taken place.

As a mature believer, Jethro is able to properly interpret the historic events of his era. Because most of Israel had not grown spiritually, they are unable to correctly understand what is taking place.

We have heard the people of Israel and how they have responded to each and every difficulty which they face. Here is how Jethro understands these events:

Exodus 18:11 **Now I know that YAHWEH is greater than all the Elohim [that is, false gods]; truly, in the way in which He acted proudly against them.** (HRB)

Before we interpret this verse, we need to clear up some problems. In v. 11, the Hebrew Roots Bible should not have capitalized *elohims*; nor should they have added the s at the end. The *-im* ending is plural in the Hebrew. Context determines whether we translate this word *God* or *gods*. Here, we would correctly translate it *gods*; we would correctly transliterate this word as *elohim*. Since the Hebrew Roots Bible transliterates this word, they should have explained this choice in their introduction; and then have done it correctly. I am not saying that the HRB is a bad translation; I am simply correcting this passage.

Jethro had already believed in the Revealed God. He knew a great many things about God; and he taught Moses these things. However, it is at this point that Jethro recognizes that the God that he worships is the specific God of Israel. This would have been a great revelation to him (although it is very likely that Moses recited and taught the book of Genesis²⁰ to Jethro during those 40 years).

²⁰ Moses would not have a number of scrolls which he carried; he would have the book memorized and in his head.

Exodus 18:12 And Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, took a burnt offering and sacrifices to Elohim. And Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to eat bread before Elohim with Moses' father-in-law. (HRB)

Jethro offers up some animal sacrifices in recognition of the Person of Y^ehowah; and they ate a meal before God with all of the elders of Israel.

Exodus 18:13 And it happened on the next day that Moses sat to judge the people. And the people stood beside Moses from the morning until the evening. (HRB)

The next day was *take your father-in-law to work* day, and that is what Moses did. Jethro observed Moses from morning to night.

This was the earliest recorded version of *The Peoples' Court*.

Exodus 18:14 And Moses' father-in-law saw all which he was doing to the people. And he said, What is this thing which you are doing to the people? Why are you sitting by yourself, and all the people standing beside you from morning until evening? (HRB)

Once this was all over, Jethro says, "What the heck are you doing, Moses? You are going to run yourself ragged handling all of these cases! This does not work for the people either."

Exodus 18:15–16 And Moses said to his father-in-law, Because the people come to me to seek Elohim. When they have a matter, they come to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor. And I make known the statutes of Elohim, and the laws from His Torah. (HRB)

Moses explains, "The people have complaints against one another. They come to me and I give them a ruling, based upon my understanding of God. I make known to them the statutes and laws of God."

Moses is actually acting in accordance with Egyptian law (which he knows) as understood correctly by a believer in the Revealed God. Moses does not, at this time, have a set of statutes which he consults. He has common sense, a thorough understanding of Egyptian law (part of his training as a young man), and divine viewpoint in his soul. These things combined are called here *the statutes of Elohim, and the laws from His Torah*.

What Moses is saying applies to this point in time. He has learned a great deal about God in the past couple months; and under the teaching that Jethro gave him for 40 years. He was working primarily from divine establishment principles. Moses has an inherent understanding of right and wrong.

But Jethro does not say, "That is great, Moses. I am proud of you, son."

Exodus 18:17 And the father-in-law of Moses said to him, The thing which you do is not good. (HRB)

I would suspect that Moses was quite proud of what he did. Jethro observed Moses fairly judge case after case, and perhaps Moses determined 30 cases this day. For him, that would have been a good day.

Moses may have said, "Father, that was pretty much a typical day. What do you think?"

But Jethro does not praise him. Jethro tells Moses, "This is not good, what you are doing."

That must have surprised Moses. He did not get much praise or appreciation from the Israelites, but surely his own father-in-law could see all that Moses had to deal with. But his father-in-law has a whole different opinion. Because Moses is grace oriented, he is going to hear his father-in-law out.

Exodus 18:18 Surely you will wear out, both you and this people with you. For the thing is heavy for you. You are not able to do it by yourself. (HRB)

Jethro continues: “This is way, way too much work for one man to do. Furthermore, it is inefficient.”

Exodus 18:19 *Now listen to my voice. I will advise you, and may Elohim be with you. You be for this people before Elohim, and you bring the matters to Elohim.* (HRB)

Then Jethro says, “Let me tell you what you should be doing.”

I don’t care how impertinent Jethro may sound, he is absolutely right. Moses cannot continue to lead his people in this way and judge their every dispute.

Jethro Advises Moses (AI-generated parsha illustration, by B. Spitz); from the [Times of Israel](#); accessed August 9, 2023. I had no idea that this was computer-generated except by its description.

Exodus 18:20 *And you warn them as to the statutes and the laws of the Torah, and make known to them the way in which they should walk, and the work which they should do.* (HRB)

“The first thing you need to do,” Jethro tells him, “is give them an idea of what laws and regulations they need to follow.”

At this point, these laws and statutes are going to come from Moses’ training under Jethro and what he knows about God from these past few months.

I don’t believe that Moses or Jethro had any idea what was going to happen next. Neither man thought, “I bet God is going to call for Moses to come up His mountain, and God is going to give all of these laws to him.” That was not on either man’s radar.



Nevertheless, wouldn’t it be great if Moses had an actual set of laws and statutes directly from the Lord to follow?

Exodus 18:21 *And you, you shall look out men of ability out of all the people, who fear Elohim, men of truth, hating unjust gain. And you place these over them as rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.* (HRB)

Occasionally, in these chapter reviews, I use a translation which requires some explanation. Believe it or not, *you shall look out men of ability* is a legitimate translation. Better, *you shall contemplate [or, have a vision of] men of ability*. We discussed this verb earlier in more detail.

“You need to hire some judges,” Jethro tells him, “with these qualifications. They must be honest and not open to bribery. You are going to have intermediary rulers under you.”

Exodus 18:22 *And let them judge the people at all times. And it shall be that every great matter they shall bring to you, and every small matter they shall judge. And you make it easy on yourself, and let them bear with you.* (HRB)

“These men are going to handle the small matters, and anything big needs to be brought to you.”

Exodus 18:23 *If you do this thing, and Elohim command you, you will be able to stand; and also this people will go in peace to their place.* (HRB)

“This is what you need to do in order to outlast this people. Otherwise, they are going to send you to an early grave!” is the essence of what Jethro is saying.

You may notice another oddity of this translation—let’s see this without the transliteration: *If you do this thing, and God commands you...* Do you see the difference between the two? *Elohim* is a plural noun, so it has the matching plural form of verb. *God* is a singular noun, so it has the matching singular form of verb. How does this read in the original Hebrew? *If you do this thing, and Elohim commands you...* Even though *Elohim* is a plural noun, it takes on the singular form of the verb (in the original Hebrew).

Exodus 18:24 *And Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law, and he did all that he had said.* (HRB)

This is a great example of Moses’ grace orientation. He does not resist the words of his father-in-law, and say, “What the heck do you know? You run a bunch of sheep in Midian and you have too many unmarried daughters. I rule over a nation of two million! What do you get the nerve to tell me what to do?” How many people would have responded in that way? But not Moses. Moses listens to his father-in-law, he evaluates the advice, and he follows it. Moses follows this advice because it is good advice.

Moses’ father-in-law has not praised Moses, saying, “You work so hard! I am impressed!” Instead, he says, “What you are doing is not good.” Then he told Moses how to do it better. Moses does not let his ego get in the way. His feathers are not ruffled. He does not go on the defensive. He listened to his father-in-law (really listened); recognized his advice as being good, and then he followed it.

Exodus 18:25–26 *And Moses chose men of ability from all Israel and made them heads over the people; rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all times; the hard matters they brought to Moses, and every small matter they judged themselves.* (HRB)

Moses does exactly what his father-in-law has suggested.

I believe that this response of grace orientation indicates that God can take Moses to even greater heights of leadership.

Application: Now, how do we apply this? I am not the ruler over a nation, nor would I want to be. You are not. Nevertheless, there are people in our lives who are able to view our lives and sometimes make a suggestion that is worth following. For many men, this is often the wife. Even though you have the authority over your wife, does that mean you ignore everything she says and periodically let her know your dictates from Mount Sinai? Of course not! There are times when your wife is going to make a suggestion, and it is a brilliant suggestion (just as Jethro’s suggestion was to Moses). Being the person in charge of anything does not mean you listen to just one voice, and that is your own. God gave you that woman as a help. Do not make the mistake of ignoring this great gift from God.

Application: Many companies have had suggestion boxes; and people who contribute their opinion here are often people with their eyes on the ground, knowing at ground-level what is taking place. Such a person can be invaluable to the prosperity of your organization.

Application: I was a teacher for about 25 years, and now and again, a very shy student would approach me after class and voice a complaint or a suggestion. I used to hand out evaluation forms at the end of my semester teaching at a community college. I took most of the suggestions seriously. This does not mean I changed everything I did from top to bottom, depending upon the commentary; but there were so many times when outside eyes made it obvious that I was doing X, but I should be doing Y.

Application: I have used the illustration of the chapter studies which I do. At one time, I would just start writing, in paragraph form, all about the grammar and vocabulary of the verse at hand. A friend of mine read this and suggested that it was gobbledy gook to him. If the first paragraph of explanation throws a reader for a loop,

maybe that was not the best approach. It was because of him that I developed the Greek and Hebrew tables. Anyone who wants to pass over the Greek or the Hebrew of any passage can do so quite easily now. This has completely changed the look of my written work, but it was the right thing to do. See the studies of Exodus here: www.kukis.org/Exodus This one change alone revolutionized the written work that I do; but I had to be open to the suggestion. Furthermore, the person making the complaint/observation was a charismatic—so I could easily have set aside what he said.

Application: Obviously, every complaint, criticism or suggestion that you will hear will not be valid; but don't simply skip over them because the person suggesting it does not have your full respect. He may actually have the insight which you lack.

Exodus 18:27 **And Moses let depart his father-in-law, and he went to his own land.** (HRB)

Jethro departs to return to his own household. He likely left his daughter and grandsons behind; but they will have no impact worth recording, despite their close relationship to the writer of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

To this point in Israel's history, Moses was pretty much the arbiter of right and wrong. He had been schooled in Egyptian law and he had a relationship with God. For these reasons, it made sense that he would judge between the people. However, clearly, as Jethro pointed out, this had become unworkable and impractical. So, together Moses and Jethro hammered out a system of judges and authorities. However, what they clearly lacked was a clear system of law to adhere to (they would have had case law based upon the cases where Moses had already made rulings; which rulings, I assume, were written down).

In Exodus 19, God will prepare the people for the reception of the Law, and, beginning in Exodus 20, God will personally give the people His Law. So, the Law that Israel needs right now—the perfect standard of behavior—is about to be provided for them.

Carroll summarizes portions of the Genesis narrative very much like Edersheim does.

Shmoop Summary of Exodus 18

Jethro and the Israelite Court System

- Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, comes for a visit. He brings Moses's wife Zipporah and Moses's sons Gershom and Eliezer (who finally has a name). It's unclear whether Moses and Zipporah were getting along well before this.
- Moses fills Jethro in on all that has happened to the Israelites, and not surprisingly, Jethro is amazed.
- Jethro, Moses, and Aaron worship and eat together. Like ya do.
- We finally get an idea of Moses's day job: he's the judge of all the Israelites. 600,000+ people. Think about that.
- Jethro knows this is tough business. He tells him, "This is nuts. You'll tucker yourself out doing all this. Why don't you appoint some minions who will apply God's laws? Just take the big cases for yourself."
- Moses agrees that this is a way better idea than what he's been doing.
- Having been the perfect plot-mover, Jethro goes home to Midian.

From <https://www.shmoop.com/exodus/chapter-18-summary.html> accessed April 29, 2019.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Alfred Edersheim wrote a book called *The Bible History, Old Testament*, which is very similar to Josephus, where he simply rewrites much of what is in the Bible, and adds in notes and comments as he deems to be relevant.

This comes from Chapter , entitled *The Exodus and The Wanderings in the Wilderness*.

Edersheim Summarizes Exodus 18

Amalek opposes the advance of Israel; Israel must fight, but the victory is God's; Israel holds the rod of almighty power in the hand of faith; but that rod must ever be uplifted toward heaven in present application for the blessing secured by covenant-promise.

If the attack of Amalek represented the hostility of the world to the kingdom of God, the visit of Jethro, which followed Israel's victory, equally symbolized the opposite tendency. For Jethro came not only as Moses' father-in-law to bring back his wife and children - although even this would have expressed his faith in Jehovah and the covenant-people, - but he "rejoiced for all the goodness which Jehovah had done to Israel." More than that, he professed,

"Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods; for He has shown Himself great in the thing wherein they (the Egyptians) had dealt proudly against them (the Israelites)" (Exodus 18:11).

As this acknowledgment of God led Jethro to praise Him, so his praise found expression in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, after which Jethro sat down with Moses and Aaron, and the elders of Israel, to the sacrificial meal of fellowship with God and with each other. Thus Jethro may be regarded as a kind of first fruits unto God from among the Gentiles, and his homage as an anticipating fulfillment of the promise; (Isaiah 2:3) "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths."

A very marked advantage was immediately derived from the presence of Jethro. Just as after the conversion of the Gentiles to Christianity, the accumulated learning and research of heathenism were to be employed in the service of the Gospel, so here the experience of Jethro served in the outward arrangements of the people of God. Hitherto every case in dispute between the people had been brought to Moses himself for decision. The consequence was, that Moses was not only in danger of "wearing away," from the heaviness of the work, but the people also (18:18), since the delay which necessarily ensued was most tedious, and might easily have induced them to take justice into their own hands. Now the advice which Jethro offered was to teach the people "ordinances and laws," and to "shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work they must do." Whatever questions arose to which the ordinances, laws, and directions, so taught them, would find a ready application, were to be considered "small matters," which might be left for decision to subordinate judges, whom Moses should "provide out of all the people - able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness" (ver. 21). Whatever came not within range of a mere application of these known laws were "great matters," which Moses should reserve for his own decision, or rather, "bring the causes unto God." And this wise advice was given so modestly and with such express acknowledgment that it only applied "if God command" him so, that Moses heard in it the gracious direction of God Himself. Nor would it be possible to imagine a more beautiful instance of the help which religion may derive from knowledge and experience, nor yet a more religious submission of this world's wisdom to the service and the will of God, than in the advice which Jethro gave, and the manner in which he expressed it. From Deuteronomy 1:12-18 we learn that Moses carried out the plan in the same spirit in which it was proposed. The election of the judges was made by the people themselves, and their appointment was guided, as well as their work directed, by the fear and the love of the Lord.

From <https://www.biblestudytools.com/history/edersheim-old-testament/volume-2/chapter-9.html> accessed October 5, 2023.

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Addendum

The ancient historian Josephus seems to take the Old Testament texts at face value and uses them to record the history of this era.

Josephus' History of this Time Period

**Antiquities of the Jews - Book III
CONTAINING THE INTERVAL OF TWO YEARS.
FROM THE EXODUS OUT OF EGYPT, TO THE REJECTION OF THAT GENERATION.**

CHAPTER 1.

**HOW MOSES WHEN HE HAD BROUGHT THE PEOPLE OUT OF EGYPT LED THEM TO MOUNT SINAI;
BUT NOT TILL THEY HAD SUFFERED MUCH IN THEIR JOURNEY. ⁽¹⁶⁾**

⁽¹⁶⁾ As to the affliction of Abraham's posterity for 400 years, see Antiq. B. I. ch. 10. sect. 3; and as to what cities they built in Egypt, under Pharaoh Sesostri. and of Pharaoh Sesostri's drowning in the Red Sea, see Essay on the Old Testament, Append. p. 132-162.

From: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-3.htm> accessed . Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*; Book 2, Chapter 1.

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[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

A Complete Translation of Exodus 18

A Reasonably Literal Translation

A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase

Jethro come to Moses in the desert-wilderness

Jethro, Moses's father-in-law and a priest of Midian, heard all that Elohim had done for Moses and for His people Israel, for [he heard that] Y^ehowah brought Israel out of Egypt.

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law who was also a priest in Midian, heard all about what God had done through Moses and for His people Israel. He heard that Jehovah brought the people of Israel out of Egypt.

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after her departing with her two sons. The name of one of whom [is] Gershom, for [Moses] said, "I was a stranger in a foreign land." The name of the [other] one was Eliezer, for [Moses said,] "The Elohim of my father [is] my help, for He saved me from the sword of Pharaoh."

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, from Midian, to where Moses was, after she had left Moses. And Jethro also took her two sons, Gershom, who received that name because Moses was a stranger in a strange land, and Eliezer, so named because Moses knew that God had helped him. God had preserved him from Pharaoh's sword.

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, and Moses' [lit., *his*] sons and his wife, were coming to Moses, to the desert-wilderness. While he [Moses] is bivouacking, [at] the mountain of God, he [Jethro] said to Moses [through a messenger], "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you, with your wife and her two sons."

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, after hearing all these reports about Moses and what took place in Egypt, set out to come to Moses in the desert-wilderness. While Jethro is bivouacking at the mountain of God, he sent a messenger to Moses, who said, "I am your father-in-law Jethro and I am coming to you; and with me are your two sons and your wife."

A Complete Translation of Exodus 18

A Reasonably Literal Translation

A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase

Moses and Jethro meet; a burnt sacrifice is offered up to God

Moses came out to meet his father-in-law. He bowed down and he kissed him. Each [man] asks his friend about his welfare. Then they went into the tent [to talk further]. Moses recounted to his father-in-law all that Y^ehowah had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt, on account of Israel; [and] all the distress which came upon them in the way. However, Y^ehowah delivered Israel [lit., *them*].

Upon receiving this message, Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. He bowed before his father-in-law and then kissed him. The men asked one another of their welfare and how they were each doing. Then they went into Moses' tent to talk further. Moses recounted to his father-in-law all that Jehovah had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt—all on account of Israel—and he told him about all the pressure to yield which came upon them in the way. And yet, in all of this, Jehovah delivered Israel out of Egypt.

Jethro rejoices over all the good that Y^ehowah has done for Israel, in that He rescued them from the hand of Egypt. Jethro then said, "Praise is to Y^ehowah, for He rescued you [all] from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of Pharaoh, Who rescued the people from [being] under the boot [lit., *hand*] of Egypt. And now I know that Y^ehowah is greater than all [other] gods, for in the thing that [took place], they acted arrogantly against them."

Jethro, with Moses, rejoices over all the good that Jehovah was done for Israel, in that He rescued them from Egyptian control. He said, "Praise to Jehovah, for He rescued you from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of Pharaoh. He rescued your people from being under the boot of Egyptian tyranny. It is clear to me that Jehovah is greater than all other gods; and it is clear that Egypt acted with arrogance against the people of Israel."

Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, took a burnt offering and [some] sacrifices to Elohim [to offer up to Elohim]. Aaron also came in, with all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Jethro [lit., *father-in-law of Moses*] before Elohim.

Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, took a burnt offering and some sacrifices to God to offer up to God. Aaron also came in, along with the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Jethro and to share in the sacrificial ceremony before God.

Jethro observes Moses judging the people

And it was on the next day that Moses sat to judge the people. And the people stood by Moses from morning to sunset. Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, so he asked, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why [are] you sitting alone with all the people standing by you from morning til sunset?"

On the next day, Moses sat to judge the people. The people stood by Moses from morning to night. Moses' father-in-law observed all that Moses did for the people, and he asked Moses, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why are you handling this on your own, while the people are standing before you from morning to night?"

Moses answered his father-in-law, [saying,] "[I do this] because the people come to me to inquire of Elohim; for [because of] a dispute [lit., *a word*]. They come to me and I will make a judgement between a man and his fellow; then I make known the decrees of Elohim and His laws."

Moses answered his father-in-law, saying, "I do all of this because people come before me to known the will and judgment of God. They come with disputes between one another, and I make a judgement between the two parties, making known to them the decrees and laws of God."

Jethro suggests a better way

A Complete Translation of Exodus 18	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Moses' father-in-law said to him, "[This is] no good the thing which you are doing, [for] you will surely wear out both you and the people with you, for this thing [is too] hard for you. You are unable to do it by yourself.	Moses' father-in-law gave Moses some good advice: "This is not good, what you are doing, acting as the only judge of the people. You will wear yourself out; and the people too, because you simply cannot get to them all. This thing is too much for one man; you cannot do this by yourself.
Now, hear my voice [and] I will advise you, for [lit., and] Elohim is with you. [This is what] you will do for the people before Elohim: you will bring near [their] disputes before Elohim; and you will teach them the statutes and the laws. And you will make known to them they way in which they should walk; and they will do the work [which you have been doing].	Please hear my voice, son-in-law, and take my advice. Clearly, God is with you. Let me suggest how you should deal with the people before God. Teach them all God's statutes and His laws; and make them know the way in which they should walk. Then they can do much of the work that you have been doing.
You will choose from all the people men of authority, those who fear Elohim, men of truth, haters of bribery [and greed]; and you will place [them] over the people [lit., them]. [There will be] officials of thousands, officials of hundreds, officials of fifties, and officials of tens. They will judge the people all of the time. And it will be, [for] every important matter, they will bring [that] to you; but for minor matters, they themselves will judge [those]. [This will] lighten from upon you [the heavy load of cases]; they will bear [this burden] with you.	You must first select from the people men with authority, those who fear God, men of truth, those who hate bribery and greed. You will place them them into organized systems of authority, officials over a thousand, officials over a hundred, officials over fifty and officials over ten. So, once this is all organized, then extremely important matters will still be brought to you; but the less significant matters they will judge themselves. This will lighten your case load as they will bear much of this burden with you.
If you do this thing and [if] Elohim commands [it], then you will be able to stand [without being totally exhausted] and also, this people will go to their place in peace."	If you do what I am suggesting here—assuming that God commands it—then you will be able to perform your duties without being exhausted and the people, being handled by a more efficient court system, will be able to return to their own homes in peace."
Moses follows the advice of his father-in-law	
Consequently, Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and he did all that he said. Moses chose men of ability from all Israel and he made them heads over the people—officials of thousands, officials of hundreds, officials of fifties and officials over tens. [These men] would judge the people all of the time. They [still] brought the difficult cases to Moses, but they judged the small cases themselves.	Consequently, Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and he did all that he suggested. Moses chose men of ability from all Israel and he gave them authority over the people. He organized these officials to be over specific groups and they would do nearly all of the adjudication. If a case was difficult, then they would bring it to Moses. However, they judged the less difficult cases themselves.
Moses [later] sent his father-in-law away, and he went to his [own] country.	Moses later sent his father-in-law away, so Jethro returned to his own land.
Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The following Psalms would be appropriately studied at this time:

Doctrinal Teachers Who Have Taught Exodus 18

	Series	Lesson (s)	Passage
R. B. Thieme, Jr. taught this	1963 Life of Moses (689)	#16	Exodus 18–19:3

R. B. Thieme, III has not taught this on any available lesson.

Word Cloud from a Reasonably Literal Paraphrase of Exodus 18



Word Cloud from Exegesis of Exodus 18²¹



²¹ Some words have been left out of this graphic; including *Strong*, *BDB*, and *pronounced*.

These two graphics should be very similar; this means that the exegesis of Exodus 18 has stayed on topic and has covered the information found in this chapter of the Word of God.

Beginning of Document	Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines
Introduction and Text	First Verse	Addendum
www.kukis.org	Exodus folder	Exegetical Studies in Exodus