

Torah: Sh'mot (Exodus) 18:1 – 20:23(26)
Haftarah: Yesha'yahu (Isaiah) 6:1-7:6, 9:5(6)-6(7) (A); 6:1-13 (S)
B'rit Hadashah: Matthew 5:13-48

	<i>year 1, 2, 3 – 18:1 – 20:23(26)</i>
1	18:1 – 12
2	18:13 – 23
3	18:24 – 27
4	19:1 – 6
5	19:7 – 19
6	19:20 – 20:14
7	20:15 – 26

and Yitro heard (priest of Midian, father-in-law of Moshe) / all that ADONAI had done for Moses and for the people of Israel for ADONAI / had brought Israel our from Egypt

va'yishma Yitro khohén Midyan khoten Moshé et kol ashér asah Elohim l'Moshé u'le'Yisraél amo ki hotzi ADONAI et Yisraél mi'Mitzráyim

וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כֹּהֵן מִדְיָן חָתָן מֹשֶׁה אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹהִים לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ כִּי-הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם:

Chapter 18 is recognized as not chronological (see Nu. 10:11, 29-32). It contrasts the behavior of the Amalekites and that of the Midianites. It also creates a logical transition to the giving of the law that follows.

The haftarah recalls a prophet's revelatory experience "seeing" HaShem on his throne, hearing the angelic call "Kadosh! Kadosh! Kadosh!" [Holy! Holy! Holy!] is HaShem of Hosts, and responding to the call to be light to the nations.

Aliyah Highlights

- Ex. 18:1-12** Yitro (aka Re'uel, Nu. 10:11), Moshe's father-in-law (*khoten* – חָתָן – father-in-law, bridegroom) comes with Moshe's wife and two sons. He acknowledges and worships HaShem with offerings and sacrifices, grateful for all he has done. A ceremonial meal is shared.
- Ex. 18:13-23** Yitro criticizes Moshe's judiciary system, proposing a new one. Moshe would teach the law (not legislate it) and express the will of HaShem through human judges.
- Ex. 18:24-27** Moshe accepts Yitro's proposal, choosing competent men and giving them authority to judge.
- Ex. 19:1-6** Three months after leaving Egypt, the people set up camp at Mt. Sinai. Moshe meets HaShem on the mountain, who offers an unparalleled covenant relationship to be his treasured possession (*segulah* – סְגֻלָּה), a kingdom of priests and a nation who pursues holiness (De. 7:6, 14:2, 26:18-19, Ps. 114:1-2, Le. 19:1).
- Ex. 19:7-19** The people immediately and unanimously accept, even before hearing the detailed terms of the covenant. Ex. 3:12 is fulfilled. Three days are given to properly reflect, consider, and prepare. The third day fell on what would become Sivan 6, *Shavu'ot*. Thunder, lightning, cloud, and the sound of jubilee (*yovel* – יָבֵל – trumpet/jubilee, Ex. 19:13/Le. 25:10) and shofar (Ex. 19:19) shook the people (Ex. 19:16) and the mountain (Ex. 19:18).
- Ex. 19:20-20:14** Moshe alone ascends to the top of the mountain. The priests (*cohanim* – כֹּהֲנִים) / firstborn (Nu. 3:11-13, 8:16-18) could go up the mount, but not to the top. The Ten Words (aseret ha'd'variym – עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרִים) are given.
- Ex. 20:15-26** The people "saw" the thunder, lightning (*lapidiym* – לַפְדִּים – torches; Ge. 15:17, Ex. 20:16, Acts 2:1-3), and they were afraid. Moshe comforted them. Instructions for altar / sacrifice given.

Parashah 17 Yitro - יתרו

Theme

Ten “Words” for All Humanity: The term “commandment” (Hebrew, *mitzvot*) is not used in the context of Exodus chapter 20. The Greek translation, *deka logoi*, gave rise to the more accurate English alternative, *The Decalogue*. The introductory statement (Ex. 20:1) does not indicate to whom this declaration is addressed. It is written in the second person, singular, so it could be addressed to all people as a singular corporate entity, or individuals who enter into this covenant with HaShem. We also know that a “mixed multitude” left Egypt (Ex. 12:38) and crossed the sea, creating a composite humanity that stood at Mt. Sinai, and will stand before his presence again (Rev. 7:9, Ps. 117)

Thought Focus

How we hear – Consider what Yitro “heard” (Ex. 18:1). Others heard, too (Ex. 15:14-15). But what made him come? Two people can hear the exact same thing, but respond in totally different ways. The inspiration of significant events will fade with time. gratitude for what HaShem has done motivate us to draw near and serve him with sacrifice in joy.

Jubilee or Trumpet? – The primary meaning of the root of *yovel* – יָבֵל means “to cause to transport an object from one place to another” (TWOT). The sound of the shofar caused the children of Yis’rael to be transported from slavery to divine covenant service.

Foreshadow of the Temple – Moshe was the only soul allowed to ascend to the summit of the mountain (holy of holies). The priests could ascend the mountain (Holy Place), and the people remained at the foot of the mountain (outer court). The Tabernacle/Temple would be modeled after this structure.

Daily Devotional questions for reflection and application

1. (18:1) Have you heard about God’s great works? What are you doing to follow after Him? (Exo 15:14-15, Jos 2:9-10, Isa 63:12-13, Act 7:36, 1Co 10:1-2, Heb 11:29, Mat 2:2, Isa 40:7-8, Mat 24:32-35)
2. (18:13) Do the people in authority over you enjoy their service? How do you view/treat them? (Jud 4:4-5, Deu 17:9, Pro 31:23, Mat 23:2-3, Heb 13:17, Isa 62:6, Acts 20:28, 1Th 5:12-13)
3. (18:25) Do you live a lifestyle of “valor?” (Exo 18:21, Rut 2:1, Rut 3:11, Psa 24:3-4, 1Ti 2:8-9, 1Ti 3:1-13, Tit 2:1-10)
4. (19:1) God courts Israel for 3 months before she accepts His proposal. Have you accepted His proposal to you? (Gen 2:24, Psa 45:10-11, 2Co 5:17, Mat 10:34-37, Exo 24:7, Son 2:10-13, Isa 55:1-3, Phi 3:7-9)
5. (19:7) Are you prepared to put God’s Word before all the people He sends your way? (Mat 3:2, Mat 4:17, Mat 21:28-32, Luk 10:36, Luk 18:8, 2Ti 4:2, 1Pe 3:15)
6. (19:20) Are you comfortable with the physical manifestation of God? (Heb 1:1-2, Psa 40:6, Psa 16:10; Isa 42:1-9, 49:1-13, 50:4-9, 52:13-53:12; Luk 4:32, Mar 15:39, Rev 19:11-16, Neh 9:13-15, 1Jo 4:2-3)
7. (20:15) Have you had an experience and an encounter with God that you can never forget? (Isa 24:20, Joh 1:14, 1Jo 1:1, Heb 1:1-3, Luk 2:8-14, Mat 2:1-2, Act 2:1-4, Act 2:7-11, Act 4:19-22, Isa 66:18-19)