

Portion Yithro Exodus - Shemoth (18:00-21.3)

Moses' father in law Jethro was the high priest of idol worshippers. He heard about the wonders God had done for Moses and God's People Israel. So he brought his daughter Zipporah, Moses' wife and their two sons to the Israelite camp by the Mountain of God. Moses went out to meet Jethro and they asked about each other's welfare. Moses then told him, from the beginning, all that God did to Pharaoh and Egypt for the sake of Israel. Then the frustrations they encountered on the way and how God had rescued them.

Jethro was overjoyed at all the good that God had done for Israel, He said, "Praised be God of Israel, freer of people. Your God is greater than all the Egyptian deities, for your God overpowered them all." Jethro then brought offerings and made sacrifices to God and everyone feasted.

The next day Jethro observed a tired Moses settling the peoples disputes. "This is too much. Set up a system of God-fearing, honest men of truth who hate injustice to hear the simple cases. They will rule according to God's laws and give you only the hardest cases. Moses listened to his father-in-law and followed his advice.

In the third month after the Hebrews left Egypt, they came to the Sinai desert and camped across from the mountain. At Mt. Sinai, Moses went up to God. God called down and told him God's Message for the Children of Israel.

Moses returned to the Israelites, "God said, 'You saw what I did to Egypt. You saw how I brought you out on eagle's wing and brought you to Me. Now, if you obey Me faithfully and keep My Covenant, you shall be My people, a special treasure among the nations. You will a kingdom of priests and a holy nation to Me.'" All the people answered as one, "All that God has spoken, we will do."

Moses returned to God, Who said, "In 3 days, I will come to you in a thick cloud and all the people will hear when I speak to you. Then they will believe in you forever. Now, tell the people to be completely clean when they come to the foot of the Mountain."

On the 3rd day, there was thunder, lightning, fire and smoke on Mt. Sinai. The shofar blew louder and louder and the people were scared.

Then God spoke so all could hear:

I THE LORD AM YOUR GOD WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT OUT OF THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE.

DO NOT HAVE ANY GODS BEFORE ME. DO NOT REPRESENT ME BY A STATUE OR PICTURE OR ANYTHING IN HEAVEN, EARTH OR SEA. DO NOT BOW TO THEM NOR WORSHIP THEM FOR I AM HASHEM, YOUR GOD, WHO DEMANDS EXCLUSIVE WORSHIP. I VISIT THE SINS OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATIONS WHO REJECT AND HATE ME BUT SHOW KINDNESS TO THE THOUSANDTH GENERATION OF THOSE WHO LOVE ME AND OBSERVE MY COMMANDMENTS.

YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE LORD'S NAME IN VAIN. GOD DOES NOT LET ONE WHO SWEARS FALSELY IN GOD'S NAME GO UNPUNISHED.

REMEMBER THE SABBATH AND KEEP IT HOLY. SIX DAYS YOU MAY ACCOMPLISH YOUR WORK BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH TO GOD. NEITHER YOU, NOR YOUR CHILDREN, WIFE, ANIMAL NOR GUESTS, ARE TO WORK ON THE SABBATH BECAUSE GOD CREATED EVERYTHING IN SIX DAYS AND RESTED ON THE SEVENTH. THUS GOD BLESSED THE SABBATH AND MADE IT HOLY.

HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER. YOU WILL THEN LIVE LONG ON THE LAND THAT GOD YOUR GOD IS GIVING YOU.

DO NOT MURDER.

DO NOT COMMIT SEXUAL IMPROPRIETY.

DO NOT STEAL.

DO NOT LIE AND TESTIFY FALSELY AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR.

DO NOT ENVY YOUR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE OR WIFE, SERVANT OR PROPERTY. DO NOT COVET ANYTHING THAT BELONGS TO SOMEONE ELSE.

The people were scared to hear God. They said, “You talk and listen to God, Moses. We will listen to you.” Moses answered “Remember your fear of God so that you will obey God’s Commandments and not sin. Honor God with offerings. Every time you honor God, God will bless you.”

Questions: 1) What is the hardest commandment for you to keep? What is the easiest? 2) Why does God not want us to make an image of God? 3) What is wrong with coveting what other people have?

Illustration Ideas: Jethro honoring God Almighty...The Hebrews promising to do what God wants...Mt. Sinai with thunder and lightning and fire when God gives the Ten Commandments...The people being afraid...