

Exodus 16-18 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Outline of Exodus

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What we're studying here is more than just an interesting historical narrative.

This is a picture of the spiritual life. The Apostle Paul says as much when in 1 Cor. 10, he writes –

¹Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud,

Stop there & note that – we often think of the pillar of cloud and fire that led the children of Israel through the Wilderness in the Exodus as going out in front of them – and it did, but it did more than that. The cloud also covered them, providing shade & protection from the burning heat of the desert.

And there is another great lesson – as we follow the Lord, walking in His direction and Spirit, we enjoy His protection.

all passed through the sea, ²all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. ⁵But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness. ⁶Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. ⁷And do not become idolaters as were

some of them. As it is written, *“The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”*⁸ Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell;⁹ nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents;¹⁰ nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

¹¹Now all these things happened to them as examples, and -they were written for our -admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

The Exodus & the journey to Canaan are all meant to be a portrait of the work of God in our lives, and our response to it.

Egypt represents the world, in which we were in bondage to sin. But the death of our Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ, has set us free and made us a new people, the covenant people of God.

Canaan, represents, not heaven, as in some of the old spirituals, but the Spirit filled life, which the flesh cannot enter.

The flesh has to die before we can enter fully into what the Lord intends for us.

As Paul makes clear here, several of the things that happened to Israel as they made their way *to* the Promised Land has significance to our lives as we follow the Lord today.

We'll see that in tonight's study.

CHAPTER 16

D. From Elim to the Wilderness of Sin • 16

1. 1-3 • The people complain about hunger

¹ And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt.

After coming through the Red Sea in ch. 14, they moved to a place called Marah, where there were wells of water that were too bitter to drink.

Being thirsty, the people began to complain and whine – accusing Moses of trying to kill them.

You'll remember in our study last week, that Moses was directed by the Lord to throw in a certain tree, and the waters would be made sweet.

We saw that this is a picture of how the cross turns the bitter things of the Word of God into blessing.

Then they traveled from Marah to Elim where there was an oasis where they camped for a few weeks.

The application for us from Elim is this: Even though we're saved and have been delivered from the *power* of the world, we still live *in* the world.

But whereas the world used to define our existence, now we've come to see that it is a spiritual *wilderness* that can give no real or lasting satisfaction.

Now our lives are a *pilgrimage*. This world is *not* our home; we're just passing through, as the Apostle Peter tells us in his letters.

And even though the wilderness is a difficult place to travel through, as we follow the Lord, He provides times of refreshing and renewal, oases in the midst of the desert, just as He did for Israel at Elim.

I'll tell you the times of refreshing that have been the most meaningful for me are those special times of worship that He's given in the context of fellowship with my brothers & sisters. There have also been some special times of refreshing with my wife when we've gone on vacation together, and enjoyed a time of rest and renewal together with the Lord.

God will give these times for refreshing and renewal, IF WE FOLLOW HIM.

It's been 4 weeks the children of Israel have been traveling now. They've left the oasis of Elim and have arrived in a barren region called *Sin*.

2 Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

3 And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat *and* when we ate bread

to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

This is just so incredibly lame! Once again they're complaining.

After the 10 Plagues. *After* the crossing of the Red Sea.

Instead of looking in faith to the Lord and simply asking Him to provide food, they begin to whine bitterly.

And though it's only been a month since they left Egypt, they already have a twisted kind of nostalgia for their days there.

Because they're hungry, they say, “Oh, remember back in Egypt when we ate barbeque and fondu? Remember back in the good ole' days when we had as many donuts and bagels as we wanted?”

Of course, there never were such days when they were in Egypt!

A slave's life is bitterly cruel, and theirs had been harder than most.

But they had a bit more food then than they had now in the wilderness, and so they began to revise their history and say that it would have been better to *die* with a *full* belly, than to *live* with a *hungry* one.

What lunacy! AND, what needless, self-inflicted misery.

God is an expert planner.

He did not bring them out into the wilderness without a plan to provide for them.

Where God guides, He provides – and quite frankly, by this time, the people ought to have understood this.

As we follow the Lord through the wilderness of this world, we are not promised smooth sailing. On the contrary, Jesus said, that in the world we would have tribulation, but that we could be of good cheer, because He has overcome the world and will carry us safely through.

We aren't exempt from trouble, trial, pain, or suffering.

But we *are* promised the presence of Christ with us *through* all these, and that as we faithfully follow Him, He will provide all that we need to make it successfully through.

It's sad when believers whine and complain when facing some trial.

They cry out, hurling accusations at God, questioning His wisdom, love, and power.

“God, how could You let this happen to me?”

“If I had known becoming a Christina would have meant this, I would never have done it. Why, my life in the world was better than this!”

God brought the children of Israel to the Wilderness of Sin, where there was no food, so He could provide for them something better than the flesh-pots and wheat of Egypt could ever give them.

The only way they would appreciate and see the food He would give them as the sweet and miraculous gift it was, was by first sensing a *need* for it, by being hungry!

Friends, make no mistake – God wants to bless you and show Himself mighty on your behalf!

He wants to be far more than a religious idea – He wants to be real to you.

He wants you to know Him as wise, loving and powerful – but the only way you can and will see that is when you are put in a place of need!

So the children of Israel arrived in the Wilderness of Sin with hungry bellies.

Here’s the lesson we can learn from this:

Are you following the Lord? Have you been seeking Him and desiring to be in the center of His will?

Has that path led you to a trial, a place of need?

Then don’t complain and doubt God. This is His way His plan to reveal Himself in His glory and power to You!

Get your eyes off the trial and onto the glorious thing God is about to do.

2. 4-12 • God will provide meat & bread

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.

God tells Moses what He’ll do – He will give them miracle bread.

The people will be given a specific command to gather so much per person per day.

This simple command regarding the provision of daily bread will be a kind of *test* as to whether or not the people are beginning to grasp the importance of being obedient to the Lord.

5 And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.”

The heart of the test will be how much they people gather once a week on the 6th day.

On that day, they will gather *twice* as much, a *double portion*, because there will be no bread given on the 7th day, so the 6th day’s gathering has to last for two days.

6 Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, “At evening you shall know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt. ⁷ And in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD; for He hears your complaints against the LORD. But what *are* we, that you complain against us?”

The people had been reminiscing about the good ole’ days in Egypt, their hearts really wanting to go back!

So Moses makes it clear in v. 6 - **“At evening you shall know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt.”**

“And now He wants to take Egypt out of YOU!”

Aaron & Moses make it clear that when the people complain about their leadership, what they’re really doing is complaining about God because they are only following Him and His lead.

8 Also Moses said, “This shall be seen when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the LORD hears your complaints which you make against Him. And what *are* we? Your complaints *are* not against us but against the LORD.”

God had not only told Moses and Aaron that He would give bread each morning, but *that* evening, He would send meat as well.

9 Then Moses spoke to Aaron, “Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, ‘Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your complaints.’ ” ¹⁰ Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

12“I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God.’ ”

3. 13-20 • Quail & manna are given

13So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. **14** And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground. **15**So when the children of Israel saw *it*, they said to one another, [manna] “What is it?” For they did not know what it *was*. And Moses said to them, “This *is* the bread which the LORD has given you to eat.

The quails mentioned here “migrate regularly between south Europe and Arabia across this region. They are small birds with a strong but low flight. They rest on the ground at nightfall. . . . The birds are good eating, and were a favorite delicacy of the Egyptians” (Cole)

So they had meat to eat that evening, and bread to eat every morning. Every morning the people would rise to find the ground covered with a fine powdery substance.

When collected, it could be fashioned into loaves like bread or cakes.

They called it “what? = manna”

While the people called it “manna,” God repeatedly referred to it as the bread from heaven (Nehemiah 9:15, Psalm 78:24, 105:40).

Those who tend to be a bit more analytical wonder how the manna could be gathered if it was like frost.

Wouldn’t gathering it, lying as it did on the ground, also sweep up dirt along with it.

Well, there’s a Jewish legend which says that before God sent the manna, He first sent winds and rain to scour the desert and remove the dirt. But as with so many of the legends of the Jews, this sounds pretty fanciful.

More than likely, there was a thick enough of a coating of

manna, that while they had to exercise care, they could gather up enough layers of it without actually touching the ground below.

We read later that what was left when the sun rose higher evaporated completely.

Picture a moderate snowfall, that's a couple inches thick. With care, you could easily scoop up an inch of pure snow.

Now Moses gives the people the commands on *how* they were to gather and prepare the daily manna.

16 This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Let every man gather it according to each one's need, one omer for each person, according to the number of persons; let every man take for those who are in his tent.' "

The "omer" was a unit of measurement that meant different things at different times to different groups.

It ranged from a "cupful" to about a gallon. But the basic idea was a *portion* – or how much was *needed* – and that's the way we ought to understand it here.

An omer, as it related to bread, was a volume unit of measure for one man's daily provision.

A grown man would consume more bread than a young child – so the portion for each varied.

Exactly HOW MUCH bread a person would eat was something they would have well known, for in that day, bread was the main staple of life and everyone knew how much bread was their *daily portion*.

Moses' command was that each person who gathered for his family was to gather enough manna for each person's daily portion – no more and no less.

This meant that the *volume gathered* equaled the volume once it had been *prepared*.

17 Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. 18 So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need. 19 And Moses said, "Let

no one leave any of it till morning.”

He told them to make sure each ate his full daily portion, leave no leftovers!

See – it’s Biblical, leftovers are not of God!

20 Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.

Even though Moses’ command about leftovers had been clear, some of the people didn’t listen and left some overnight.

The next morning, it was wormy and rotten, stinking up their tents. It didn’t take but once for the people to learn that leftovers were not allowed.

4. 21-31 • Manna & the Sabbath

21 So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted. ²² And so it was, on the sixth day, *that* they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. ²³ Then he said to them, “This *is what* the LORD has said: ‘Tomorrow *is* a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake *today*, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.’ ”

As God had commanded, on the 6th day, in preparation for the 7th, they collected a double portion, so that they would perform no work on the 7th day.

This day was set aside as a special day of rest. Note that this is something which was meant to be a part of their practice, even before the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai.

We’re told here that they would either bake or boil the manna.

Baked, it would be like bread; boiled it would be like bagels.

24 So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it.

²⁵ Then Moses said, “Eat that today, for today *is* a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the

field. ²⁶Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.” ²⁷Now it happened *that some* of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. ²⁸And the LORD said to Moses, “How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?”

God spoke this to Moses, meaning for him to speak it to the people.

²⁹See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.” ³⁰So the people rested on the seventh day. ³¹And the house of Israel called its name [“What?!?”] Manna. And it was like white coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers *made with honey*.

So now we’re given a more detailed description of the manna.

It was about the size of a coriander seed, so, picture something a bit smaller than a sesame seed if you’re not familiar with coriander.

It tasted like a light weight bread mixed with honey.

And you can be sure that because it was the miraculous bread God provided, it was plenty nutritious – like the *lembas* the elves gave Frodo & Sam.

5. 31-36 • The memorial pot of manna

³²Then Moses said, “This *is* the thing which the LORD has commanded: ‘Fill an omer with it, to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.’ ” ³³And Moses said to Aaron, “Take a pot and put an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations.” ³⁴As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. ³⁵And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land

of Canaan.

God's marvelous and miraculous provision for them was to remain a continuing testimony throughout their generations, even after they had entered the promised land and the manna no longer came.

In v. 34, Moses was told Aaron to take an omer of the manna, a daily portion for a grown man, and put it into a pot and then place it in the testimony, meaning the ark of the covenant.

This command had to have come much later, *after* the ark had been made.

And that would be at least a year after what we're reading about here.

Moses included this at this point in the story because this is where he recounts the whole story of the manna.

There were three items in the ark of the covenant – what were they? (Hebrews 9:4)

- 1) The 10 Commandments tablets – representing God's Law
- 2) The pot of manna – representing God's provision
- 3) Aaron's rod which budded – representing God's leading

36 Now an omer is one-tenth of an ephah.

This means the omer is roughly equal to about 2 litres, or 2¼ quarts.

For that time, that would have been right for the daily portion of a grown man's diet.

So, what's the spiritual lesson for us from the miracle of the manna?

We get a clue to it in Deut. 8:3. Some 40 years later, as Moses was recounting the Exodus to the next generation as they were about to enter the Promised Land, he said this -

So [God] humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. [Blank]

Moses makes clear what we looked at earlier, that God actually allowed them to grow hungry so that He could then meet their need for food.

But the deeper lesson they and we are to learn is this – while bread, even miraculously provided food, may satisfy our physical hunger, physical things can never satisfy the deeper and more important hunger of the soul – only God can do that,

and He intends to meet our need through His Word.
The manna was a picture, a type of the Word of God.
So let me ask, when did the people have to gather it? In the morning.
What happened if they failed to? It melted with the rising sun.
In the same way, God's Word is most effectively gathered in early in the day – first thing, before the sun has risen on us and daily life and work has begun.
Just as the body needs the nourishment food gives so we can have strength for our work, the spirit and soul need the nourishment of the Bread of Life, God's word if they are to have the strength they need to be effective.
What happened if the people tried to live today off yesterday's bread? It grew worms and stank!
You know, God's Word itself never grows stale, but what does, is our attempt to live today on yesterday's Word and revelation of God.
God may have spoken to you yesterday, but what He spoke then, was *for* then.
He wants to speak to your today too.
If you try to live today only on what He showed yesterday, last week, or in some glory day in the distant past, you'll find that your walk and relationship with the Lord gets wormy and starts to stink.
There's another great insight this passage teaches us – just as Moses told Aaron to gather a pot of manna and put it in the ark as a testimony to God's faithfulness and provision, so it can be extremely helpful to keep a *journal*, a container, for the precious insights God is showing you as you read and gather up His word.
I've discovered something interesting, just reading and meditating on the Word first thing when I get into the office is a great time – but when I put my journal alongside my Bible and write out what I'm seeing, the questions that arise, and how I'm responding to what I find, something much deeper and profound results.
And then, to go back and read what I wrote in previous years – awesome!
Sometimes. I'll write out my prayers to the Lord and record how

He answers.

Then, years later when I read them again, they are like that pot of manna in the ark, they stand as evidences of God's faithfulness!

CHAPTER 17

E. From The Wilderness of Sin to Rephidim • 17-18

1. 17:1-7 • Water from the rock

1 Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but *there was no water for the people to drink.*

They came to Rephidim by the commandment and leading of the Lord, yet there was no water to drink.

Just because we are having problems, it doesn't mean we are out of the will of God.

2 Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." So Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?"

Moses' frustration with the delinquency of the people is becoming more obvious.

He knows that by now, and specially with what just happened with the quail and manna, the people ought to be learning that when they have a need, it's an invitation by God to ask Him – and that He will answer them in dramatic fashion.

But instead of learning this lesson, their complaining has gone from whining, to outright contention! Now they're starting to get a bit hostile and stirred up. They're starting to act in a *menacing* manner toward Moses.

So he says, "Hold on here! Think about what you're doing – you're tempting the Lord."

Moses figures if *he's* getting ticked and frustrated with the people, how much more must God be getting angry at the people obstinate refusal to look to and trust Him?

3 And the people thirsted there for water, and the people

complained against Moses, and said, “Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”⁴ So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!”

Moses was being unfairly accused and threatened by the people.

But he knew their need was real, and being their leader, he took their need to the right place – to God.

5 And the LORD said to Moses, “Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go.

God told Moses to lead the people to a certain place, and there He would give them water.

Though Moses could have easily shrank from his role as the leader of Israel at this point, he didn't.

He knew he was the leader, not of a democracy, or by popular consent.

He was ordained and called by God to his role of leading the people – and it was a matter of faithfulness.

The people might by calling for his removal and disqualification because he led them to a place without water, but Moses didn't take his cues or direction from man – he took it from God.

So when the going got tough, Moses just looked to the Lord and did what God told him to do.

But it was right at this point that God wanted to teach Moses that the leadership of the nation, wasn't something he was to pursue on his own in solo.

So he told Moses to take some of the elders of Israel with him.

These elders were the tribal and clan patriarchs.

6 Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Okay, get the picture here: They are camped at Rephidim where there is no water.

The people complain and then start to grow agitated and hostile as they come to Moses.

He warns them and then cries out to God who tells him he is to gather the elders, take the rod which has been the symbol of his calling to lead the nation, and travel a short distance to “Horeb.”

Now, *Horeb* is the same as *Sinai* – which is both a region and a specific mountain.

There’s Mt. Sinai, the Wilderness of Sinai, and the Sinai Range.

It’s the range that Lord means here. The rock God refers to here is the very base of the foothills of the Sinai range that stretches out toward Rephidim and was just a short distance away from their camp.

The water, when it came forth would be a torrent and so had to be outside the camp so that it wouldn’t flood their tents.

It would collect and run in streams in the wadis that ran along the sides of their camp at Rephidim, where they could draw from it in safety and plenty.

So Moses did as he was told and went to the place the pillar of the Lord presence led, then he struck the rock as He was told, and the water flowed.

Moses was being told to take a step *up* in this miracle. Whereas the quail and manna just came on their own with no bidding on Moses’ part, now God calls him to participate in the miracle by striking the rock.

God wanted to vindicate Moses’ leadership and cause the people to have greater respect for him and his calling by the Lord.

God’s leaders are often called to such steps of faith and participation with the Lord in what He’s doing.

Anointed, gifted, called leadership is crucial in the Body of Christ, and God will affirm the leadership of those He’s called by having them partner with Him in a visible way in what He’s doing. He did it *here* with Moses.

7 So he called the name of the place [testing] Massah and [quarrelling] Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

The water that flowed at Massah & Meribah may have been from an

artesian well, which are typically located at the base of a mountain range.

While that may account for the origin of the water, it's flow at this point is clearly a miracle.

In Deut. 6:16, 9:22, & 33:8 Moses recounts the testing the people did of God at Massah and says that they provoked the Lord's wrath with their disbelief.

He summarizes the problem here in that they said, **“Is the Lord among us or not?”**

What an absolutely absurd and ridiculous thing for them to say! And it reveals a level of unbelief that can do nothing but provoke the anger of God.

In later years, when Israel celebrated the week long Feast of Tabernacles, they would remember the wilderness wanderings and HOW God had provide so faithful for them; the whole point of the holiday was to remember God's gracious and plentiful provision.

During the feast, they had a special celebration of the event of the water from the rock.

The priests would draw water from one of the pools in Jerusalem, then take it up to the temple altar and pout it into a little hole on the altar that led to channels in the altar and out little holes at its base.

The water would then spread across the pavement of the temple floor, looking like water was coming from the altar.

It was in this context and at this exact moment that Jesus said, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. (John 7:37-38)

John went on to give the comment that the living water Jesus spoke of was the Holy Spirit (v.39).

In the passage from 1 Cor. 10 that we read at the beginning tonight Paul wrote in v. 4 –

For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

Jesus is the bedrock of the work of God. He is the cornerstone. Moses speak of the Law, his rod a symbol of his leadership to and in the Law of God.

When Moses struck the Rock, it's a picture of the law striking

Christ, taking the blow, the curse of the law in and on Himself so that life, symbolized by the water, might flow to those who need it.

2. 17:8-13 • The battle with Amalek

Since we covered these verses in depth last Sunday, I'll just read them tonight.

8 Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. ⁹ And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." ¹⁰ So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. ¹² But Moses' hands *became* heavy; so they took a stone and put *it* under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. ¹³ So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

3. 17:14-16 • A perpetual battle with Amalek

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this *for* a memorial in the book and recount *it* in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." ¹⁵ And Moses built an altar and called its name, [Yahweh Nissi] The-LORD-Is-My-Banner;

As in a war banner, a military flag that goes before the victorious army. (Psalm 60:4 Isaiah 11:10)

¹⁶ for he said, "Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD *will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.*"

Amalek was the grandson of Esau – so the great nephew of Jacob, the father of the tribes of Israel.

Esau, you'll remember was a carnal & sensual man who was rejected by God because he cared nothing whatsoever for spiritual things.

Amalek, the grandson of Esau, is what Esau was, raised to an even higher power – he is *the* carnal man and his descendants, the Amalekites come to represent the flesh in scripture.

This is why God gives this stern warning and memorial to Joshua, who leads the army of Israel against the enemies of God.

The Amalekites will surface every now and again throughout Israel's history, and every time they do, they slip in insidiously to work some evil and bring about some tragedy.

God's remedy is to utterly wipe them out – but the people of Israel never took it seriously and always seemed to let an Amalekite or two survive, only to resurge and attack again later.

And so it is with the flesh.

God says kill it! Be done with it! That's what Galatians 2:20 and Romans 6 is all about.

But we seem to leave a little bit of the flesh alive, where it bides it's time, and the rises at some inopportune moment to work death and stumble us.

CHAPTER 18

4. 18:1-12 • Jethro & Moses meet

¹ And Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people—that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

As we mentioned in a previous study, the news of what God did to Egypt spread far and wide over the ancient world.

Transportation was slower in that day, but given time, news went far and it wasn't long before word reached Jethro about what happened and how Israel was now migrating toward his home. So he went out to meet Moses and brought Moses' wife and sons with him.

Remember that when Moses first was on his way back to Egypt he and Zipporah had had a bit of a falling out and she'd gone back to her father's home.

2 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, ³ with her two sons, of whom the name of one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land") ⁴ and the name of the other was Eliezer (for *he said*, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"); ⁵ and Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of God. ⁶ Now he had said to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her."

Jethro sent word on ahead that he was coming, and bringing his daughter and two grandsons with him to return them to Moses. It seems from what we read in v. 2 that maybe Moses had sent Zipporah *back* to Jethro, realizing the risk to her was too great in Egypt.

God had promised Moses that he would lead the nation back to this very location not far from Jethro's home, so he knew he could collect her then. (Exodus 3:12)

7 So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and kissed him. And they asked each other about *their* well-being, and they went into the tent. ⁸ And 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 come upon them on the way, and *how* the LORD had delivered them. ⁹ Then Jethro rejoiced for all the good which the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. ¹⁰ 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, *and* who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. 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." ¹² Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and *other* sacrifices *to offer* to God. And

Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

5. 18:13-23 • Leadership advice from Jethro

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

You get the scene – Moses is the Lord's anointed, and all the people want to get the best counsel and advice they can – Moses speaks for God!

But there's a problem – this is Moses' daily routine, and with 3 million people, it "ain't workin'!"

17 So Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do *is* not good. **18** 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. **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. **20** And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do.

This is great advice!

Moses, don't do just one on one counseling and settling of disputes – stand before the people and teach all of them what the Lord's will is!

Then, when there are things that are difficult to judge in, bring these to the Lord and ask for His direction. Carry what the Lord tells you back to ALL the people!

[This is what we've endeavored to do at CC.]

21 Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 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. ²³ If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace."

Very simply, Moses was being exhorted by his father-in-law to *delegate*.

He must look for mature men of virtue and good character who will assist in the task of judging among the people.

These men, each having a certain potential and capacity would be assign a varying level of authority.

Really, Jethro was advising the establishing of a court system, similar to our local, county, state and federal court system today.

But Jethro knew, the success of such a system was dependent on the quality of the people selected to serve as judges.

That's why he says they must be . . .

"able men" = Men of ability

"such as fear God" = Men of godliness

"men of truth" = Men of God's Word

"hating covetousness" = Men of honor; so they can't be bribed.

Paul gave the same counsel to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2; **"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."**

6. 18:24-27 • Moses follows Jethro's advice

24 So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said.

This shows us Moses wasn't proud or arrogant in his calling – he was a meek man or he never would have taken his father-in-law's advice.

This is one of the traits of a truly godly leader – he is *teachable*. Moses knew how to *not bow* to the complaints of the children of Israel (Exodus 17:3), but how to *hear* godly counsel from a man like Jethro.

25 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. ²⁶ So they judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to Moses, but they judged every small case themselves. ²⁷ Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way to his own land.

Moses wisely followed Jethro's counsel, and the life of the camp of Israel settled into a more normal and regular routine.