

I Do Make Them Know the Statutes of God

Exodus 18:1 – 19:5

~ When ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise! In this report, our Spiritual Safari is going to teach this truth and reveal to us that it can be very foolish to be wise. Adopting worldly wisdom is going to be Moses' second ministerial blunder in leading the children of Israel through the wilderness. Moses father-in-law comes to visit, and he offers a suggestion that Moses, apparently, doesn't even pray about. Moses and Jethro seem to be buddies with a great relationship. I'm sure Moses trusted Jethro completely; there was no reason not to. Jethro brings Zipporah, Moses wife, back to Moses with the kids in this chapter. The account we have is that Moses kisses Jethro but doesn't even say hello to his wife or two sons! Moses tells Jethro of all that God has done and how redemption has come about for Israel as a result.

Well, Jethro is interested in and enthusiastic about Moses life; in fact, Jethro shows great interest in both God and Moses. Jethro sees how much work it is for Moses to judge the people, so Jethro makes his suggestion. It may not have even been a bad suggestion - except it did not come from God! Jethro's idea was prompted by sincere care and concern for the overall well-being and health of his son-in-law. It is certainly very loving and caring as we see this man anxious about what will happen to Moses. Delegating a little responsibility seems like a pretty good idea; except it wasn't a good idea the first time with Aaron and it's not a good idea now. Ultimately, this time, I do not think this is what God wanted to be done in forming this committee. In fact, we know it wasn't God's will, but we also know that God permitted it!

That's what I call the permissive will of God, friends. If God would just stop us when we are wrong it would sure be helpful, would it not? God permits certain things to happen sometimes when we are headstrong and unwilling to take the time to pray about a matter; and it always involves adopting methods that are contrary to what He wants done! – Always! This incident reveals also just how easy it really is for a believer to unwittingly accept the

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wisdom of this world and not even think to look to God. Boards, committees and positions of prominence have wrecked the church as an organized body today. They try everything but they have no spiritual discernment at all. As a result, we have the methods of the world come into play within the church. Well, the programs and patterns of the world simply don't fit into God's plan, my beloved. He says so. Moses wrote this account so it's very interesting the way he viewed priorities. As we have said before in the Gossip Column of this so-called safari newspaper: Moses home life was definitely not as it should have been. I think we have our gossip confirmed.

When Moses first decided to return from Midian to Egypt and deliver the children of Israel from their bondage, I think Jethro was a little amused. Jethro was the priest of the entire land of Midian - and there was Moses - murderer on the lamb - declaring he was going to deliver a nation out of slavery. Frankly, I don't think Jethro believed God could deliver Israel. He certainly knew Moses couldn't do it - but God did deliver them; and here we are! I feel that this is what brought Jethro to a saving knowledge of God. Jethro makes a burnt offering and decides to hang around. Well, when we get down around verse twenty-four, we see the result of Jethro's advice: the Sanhedrin is established. Many people don't see the problem with appointing captains over the people, but the result was an entity that God did not recognize.

We are going to have to examine the complete subtlety of the incorrectness of the advice that Jethro gives to Moses to fully comprehend it. Again, I believe Jethro's intentions were good; but I know the road to hell is paved with good intentions. First of all, there are no written records of any instructions to Moses about this matter; and that should be enough to form our reasonable conclusion. Looking deeper, we can see that this suggestion by Jethro questions the will and the love of God. I mean, obviously; God wasn't doing the best He could with Moses by giving him this workload, right? It would seem that if God really loved and cared about Moses then God would have commanded Moses to delegate authority a long time ago and get some much-needed rest! Aaron was even outside of the plan of God - and that was Moses FIRST mistake. All of Moses mistakes follow this pattern, too, by the way. Satan told Eve, "... if you could only

eat of that tree you would be wise.” In other words, Satan says there’s something better for your life than God wants you to have!

If eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had been a good thing to do, then the Lord would have made that arrangement for us. He says so. It wasn’t best for Adam or Eve; and you may need to just write that down. It’s a Scriptural axiomatic principle that will answer a whole lot of our questions in this life. God is dealing definitely and directly with Moses here and God is equipping Moses to fully deliver this people His way. God didn’t need a second party brought in and God sure didn’t want a third party brought in. The result was a party of power that will ultimately insulate and disconnect the power of God from the children of Israel - and cause them to go into captivity. God went directly to Moses and spoke Face to face with him; Moses didn’t need Jethro’s advice.

Interestingly, there is always a tendency for persons and events to get between us and God. I’m not entirely sure why that is; but I do know that most people find it difficult to do business directly with the Lord Jesus. They need that secondary service or even the third party of a priest or some fanatical religio-type ritual in order to feel as if a connection was made. Some even rely on certain books and self-help prose; or going to a conference. I feel many of these people actually develop a debilitating pride in making their confessions to other men. The way I understand Scripture, God removes those people IMMEDIATELY from His service. We need to be going directly to God and laying out our business before Him on the table in the Throne Room of proper prayer. God definitely did not want this other crowd in there judging with Moses.

There is a third marvelous spectacle when we really dig this out in depth! This is the seventy, as we have said, that formed the Sanhedrin. This same group of handed down religio-politico fanatics will meet one night about fifteen hundred years later from where we are at in our study, and they will plot the murder of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Friends, make no mistake: God had supplied everything that would be required for Moses arduous duties and tasks. God wanted Moses doing those tasks and duties - or He would have gotten someone else. Neither Moses nor God needed help; and God certainly didn’t command Moses concerning it. The result:

disaster. These seventy men were no more efficient than Moses and, in fact, they hindered the works of Moses because it is the Spirit that quickeneth.

So many people feel that what we need is a proper method of doing things as Christians, that we need to adopt the right manners and mannerisms - and I will agree with that to an extent. Unfortunately, we have a whole bunch of foolish teachers and preachers who look like idiots trying to identify with the "now" generation. Everyone says they want to communicate; but no one reads any more. People only seem to read what they or someone else in their echo chamber writes - and if it is less than three sentences - and, as a result, we have a bunch of illiterate and ignorant "believers" that don't even know what they worship. I see very little "Christianity" really reaching down and touching human life. It DOES happen in the form of other people passing these reports along - and this safari is a testimony to that - but not so with the "methods" group - they just do not give back anything to this ministry in ANY way, shape or form - ever! They stifle the Gospel and harm the cause of Christ. The real tragedy is that they have no earthly idea how destructive to others they are.

God is interested neither in the number of converts you claim you have made nor the system that you have invented to come between said converts and the world, my beloved. Those plans are shelved before you even conceive of them. We are told to do ONE thing: take out the Gospel to the ends of the earth. God's wisdom sweeps all man-made religion away. The Lord Jesus Christ leaves nothing between our soul and God. The wisdom of God and the wisdom of man are as contradictory as long and short or everything and nothing. You cannot be or have both; to the extent that one is wisdom and the other is foolishness to you. God says the wisdom of the world is foolishness to Him. The foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of the world! I hope all you little Jesus people that say you love God will just go back and start over and read this entire report again one more time after you are through. Those of you who think you are clever with words and smart at twisting truths - it's not man's wisdom you mock and antagonize. It is the wisdom from above that is the wisdom you need to concentrate on today. We need to realize our need for the power of God directly in our lives right now! Our entire wilderness experience in

this Spiritual Safari correlates and directly corresponds to the believer's life today....

XVIII

1 When 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;

2 Then Jethro, Moses' father in law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back,

3 And her two sons; of which the name of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land:

4 And the name of the other was Eliezer; for the God of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh:

5 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:

6 And he said unto Moses, I thy father in law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.

7 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.

8 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.

9 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.

10 And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, 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.

11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.

12 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 bread with Moses' father in law before God.

13 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.

14 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 sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?

15 And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God:

16 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.

17 And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good.

18 Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.

19 Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God:

20 And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.

21 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:

22 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.

23 If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.

24 So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said.

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 And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.

27 And Moses let his father in law depart; and he went his way into his own land.

XIX

1 In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.

2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.

3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

~ Okay, our Spiritual Safari prepares to consider the law in this next great division of the Book of Exodus as we reach chapter nineteen. The law is pure condemnation. For the next six chapters we will camp out at Mount Sinai and see the children of Israel agree to accept the Law of God given through Moses. We are going to move so slowly and cautiously and carefully through this section of Scripture because it is so misunderstood and misapplied to the lives of believers today that we need to make a complete and correct teaching record. This section of Scripture is not studied very often, although it is spoken of incessantly, you may be sure. We will want to pay particular attention to this part of our wilderness experience.

The crossroad dilemma for the Israelite here is: do they want to continue to accept God as they have had His leading through Moses - or do they want to be given the law. So, let's briefly review this critical section of Exodus that we are leaving behind. Every step we took in Exodus is absolutely imperative to understanding what we are doing at the time in which we are studying and where we are going in Scripture from here. See, God brought the children of Israel to this place on eagle's wings. Instead of telling God they have enjoyed the trip on eagle's wings, they tell God to go ahead and give them a standard they cannot - and never did - keep! They had seen what happened to the Egyptians. What were they thinking when they agreed to the law? Candidly, I have no earthly idea.

The eagle is a bird of prey, and we see it used frequently as symbolism in Scripture. It is the symbol of the deity of God. God is surrounded by flying eagles in Heaven. The eagle can fly the highest of all fowls. The eagle is the panegyric of praise to God. God has bore the children of Israel on the wings of His creature – and they have seen God deliver them on eagle’s wings – and, yet, they decide to accept something else. Something less. God had brought these people to Himself just like this – flying them out of Egypt – and has now set them down at Mount Sinai to make a choice. Well, they're going to make a choice alright - and it will be their biggest blunder and the worst decision in their history ~

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