

Book	Key Idea	The Nation	The People	God's Character	God's Role	God's Command
Genesis	Beginnings	Chosen	Prepared	Powerful Sovereign	Creator	"Let there be!"
Exodus	Redemption	Delivered	Redeemed	Merciful	Deliverer	"Let My people go!"
Leviticus	Worship	Set Apart	Taught	Holy	Sanctifier	"Be holy!"
Numbers	Wandering	Directed	Tested	Just	Sustainer	"Go in!"
Deuteronomy	Renewed Covenant	Made Ready	Retought	Loving Lord	Rewarder	"Obey!"

Genesis 15:13-16

¹³ And God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions. ¹⁵ And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ Then in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."

Genesis		Exodus																	
Human Effort and Failure	Divine Power and Triumph																		
Word of Promise	Work of Fulfillment																		
A People Chosen	A People Called																		
God's Electing Mercy	God's Electing Manner																		
Revelation of Nationality	Realization of Nationality																		
<p>By the time of their departure from Egypt, the Israelites numbered over 2 million (Exodus 12:37; Numbers 1:46). Here are the calculations, with 2 assumptions indicated by an asterisk:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>603,550</td> <td>Warriors over 20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>+ equal number*</td> <td>All other males</td> </tr> <tr> <td>= at least 1 million</td> <td>Total males</td> </tr> <tr> <td>+ equal number*</td> <td>Total females</td> </tr> <tr> <td>= at least 2 million</td> <td>Total population</td> </tr> </table>		603,550	Warriors over 20	+ equal number*	All other males	= at least 1 million	Total males	+ equal number*	Total females	= at least 2 million	Total population	<p>The date of the Exodus if taken to be 1445 BC, is derived from 2 sets of facts:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Arrival of Jacob & family in Egypt</td> <td>1875 BC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stay in Egypt (Ex 12:40; Gal 3:17)</td> <td>- 430 years</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>= 1445 BC</td> </tr> </table>		Arrival of Jacob & family in Egypt	1875 BC	Stay in Egypt (Ex 12:40; Gal 3:17)	- 430 years		= 1445 BC
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	Beginning of Solomon's Temple	965 BC																	
	Interval since the Exodus (1 Kg 6:1)	480 years																	

"most of the ancient writers equated the Exodus with the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt around ~~1445~~ **1445 BC** 50 BC Most ancient writers put the Jews in Egypt for 215 years or less. According to most ancient writers the 430 years in Egypt was taken to start with the promise to Abraham, and the 400 years from the birth of Isaac. Others began these years with Abraham's entry into Canaan. All of the ancient Jewish and Christian writers considered in this paper took the 430 or 400 years to cover the time in Egypt as well as Canaan. Biblical writers also agree with these ancient traditions, and the archaeological evidence reinforces these views." (<http://www.bibleandscience.com/archaeology/exodus.htm>)

Gen 15:13-16: Prophecy to Demonstrate God's Faithfulness to Covenant Promises

v13 know for certain that

(1) your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs,
 (2) where they will be enslaved and oppressed

(3) for hundred years.

v14 (4) But I will judge that nation whom they will serve;

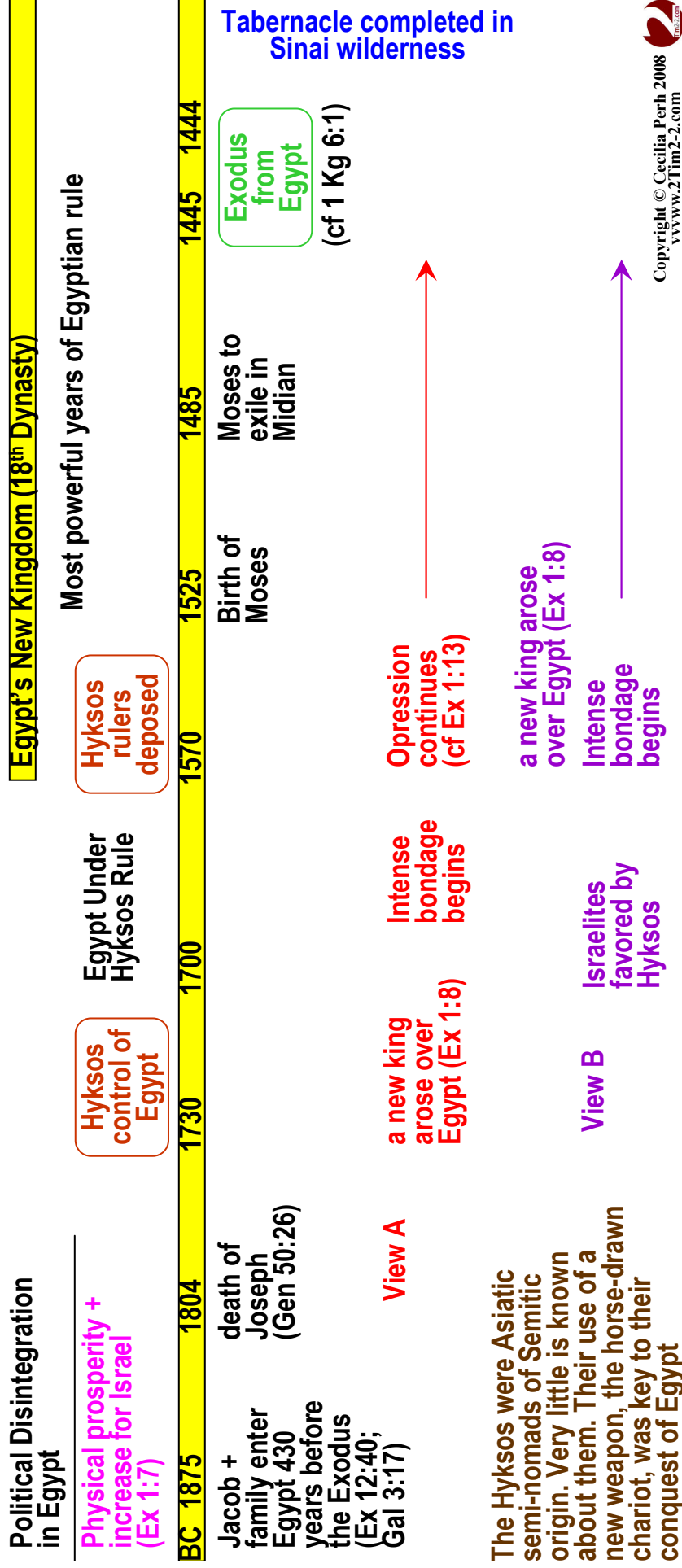
(5) and afterward, they will come out with many possessions.

v15 (6) And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace;

(7) you shall be buried at a good old age.

v16 (8) Then in the fourth generation, they shall return here,
 for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.

The Fulfillment



The Hyksos were Asiatic semi-nomads of Semitic origin. Very little is known about them. Their use of a new weapon, the horse-drawn chariot, was key to their conquest of Egypt

Exodus: Redemption and Revelation

The Redemption of God's People from Egypt (Exodus 1-18)

Bondage in Egypt (Exodus 1:1-6:27)

[1:1-22 A Deliverer Needed](#)

- [1:1-7 The Setting](#)
- [1:8-14 The Slavery](#)
- 8 The Pharaoh
- 9-10 The Plot
- 11-14 The Persecution
- [1:15-22 The Slaying](#)
- 15-16 The Charge
- 17 The Contravention
- 18 The Consternation
- 19 The Cleverness
- 20-21 The Commendation
- v22 The Command

[2:11-25 The Deliverer Prepared](#)

- [2:11-14 Moses in Egypt](#)
- 11a Moses the Prince
- 11b Moses the Deliverer
- 12 Moses the Murderer
- 13 Moses the Arbitrator
- 14 Moses the Accused
- [2:15-25 Moses in Midian](#)
- 15 Moses the Refugee
- 16-20 Moses the Stranger
- 21-22 Moses the Shepherd
- 23 Israel's Cruel Bondage
- 24-25 God's Covenant Remembered

[2:1-10 The Deliverer Born](#)

- [2:1-4 The Parturition of Moses](#)
- 1 Moses' Parents
- 2 Faith of Moses' Parents
- 3-4 Moses in a Basket
- [2:5-10 The Protection of Moses](#)
- 5-6 Pharaoh's Daughter Finds Moses
- 7-10 Pharaoh's Daughter Adopts Moses

[3:1-4:17 The Deliverer Called](#)

- [3:1-4:17 Moses in the Wilderness](#)
- 1-3 The Burning Bush
- 4-6 Holy Ground
- 7-10 Moses Commissioned
- 11-14 I AM WHO I AM
- 5-17 God's Concern for Israel
- 18-22 Egypt will be Plundered
- 4:1-9 The Signs Given
- 4:10-17 Moses' Continued Refusal

[4:18-31 The Deliverer Sent](#)

- [4:18-31 Moses in Egypt](#)
- 18 Jethro Blesses Moses
- 19-23 The LORD Instructs Moses
- 24-26 Zipporah Saves Moses
- 27 The LORD Instructs Aaron
- 28-30 Aaron Speaks for Moses
- 31 The People Worship the LORD

[5:1-6:27 Pharaoh Rejects God's Word](#)

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- [5:5-14 Pharaoh's First Act: Increased Workload](#)
- [5:15-23 The First Response](#)
- 15-19 The Protest before Pharaoh
- 20-21 The Protest Against Moses
- 22-23 The Protest before the LORD
- [6:1:8 The Reassurance of the Lord](#)
- [6:9 The Response of the People](#)
- [6:10-13 The Recommissioning of Moses](#)
- [6:14-19 The Records of Reuben, Simeon, Levi](#)
- [6:20-25 The Records of Moses and Aaron](#)
- 20 Their Parents
- 21-22 The Uncles and Cousins
- 23 Aaron's Wife and Sons
- 24-25 The Next Generation
- [6:26-27 The Reiteration of Moses' Call](#)



Exodus: Redemption and Revelation

The Redemption of God's People from Egypt (Exodus 1-18)

Redeemed from Egypt (Exodus 6:28-18:27)

[6:28-10:29 Pharaoh Rejects God's](#)

[Miracles](#)

[6:28-7:13 The Second Confrontation](#)

6:28-30 Moses' Discouragement

7:1-5 The Lord's Pronouncement

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8:1-15 Frogs

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9:8-12 Boils on Man and Beast

9:13-36 Great Hailstorm

10:1-20 Locusts

10:21-29 Darkness

[11:1-13:16 Pharaoh Ruined by God's](#) [Judgments](#)

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11:1-10 Death of Firstborn Announced

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1-6 Jethro brings Moses' Family

7-12 Jethro rejoices over God's goodness to Israel

13-27 Jethro's Counsel to Moses



The Exodus Route

Mediterranean Sea

Canaan

Dead Sea

Way of the Philistines

Goshen/Rameses

Kadesh

Succoth

Etham

Elath/Elot

1 Kings 9:26

Wilderness of the Red Sea

"entangled"

Nuweiba

Crossing Site

chariot wheels, bones

Midian

Mt. Sinai

Jabal Al Lawz
burned peak

Gulf of Aqaba

Red Sea - Yam Suph

Saudi Arabia

"Mt. Sinai in Arabia" Gal. 4:25

Red Sea

Egypt

AskDiscovery.com

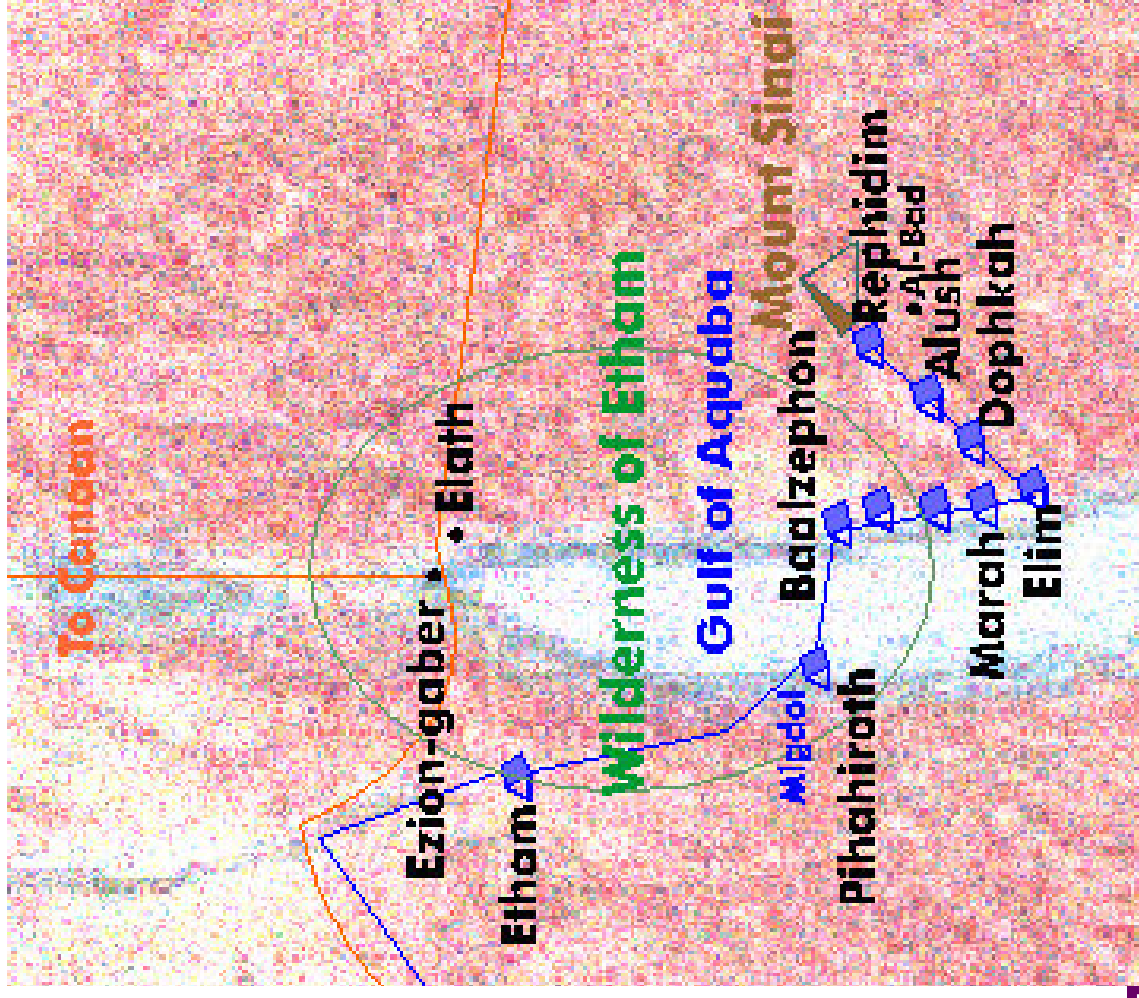
Exodus 18 – The Counsel of Jethro

v1-6 Jethro brings Moses’ Family to Him

= his abundance

**1 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.



Exodus 15:22-18:27

The Lord Provides for His People

 Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

Biblical Personalities: Jethro

He had six names: Jether, Jethro, Hobab, Reuel, Putiel, and Keni. He was called Jether because through him one "additional" portion was added to the Torah. When he did good deeds, an extra letter was added to Jether, making it Jethro (Mechilta Yitro 1:1).

At the time that Moses told Jethro, "Give me your daughter Zipporah as a wife," Jethro said to him, "Agree that your first son will be dedicated to the discovery of God through investigation and that the later progeny will be dedicated to the Name of Heaven." Moses agreed. "Swear to me," said Jethro. Moses swore (Mechilta Yitro 1:1).

When Jethro saw that the Holy One had destroyed Amalek in this world and the next, he regretted his idol worship and repented, saying, "I should follow only the God of Israel" (Shemot Rabbah 27:6).

Jethro, Moses' Father-in-Law

Jethro is a Kohen - but not a Jewish "priest." He is an idolator, a political leader, a philosopher, a trusted counselor and adviser to his ambitious, divinely inspired son-in-law. Jethro is judicious and pragmatic. He knows Moses is the true and fearless leader of the people, particularly as the future general of Israel rescues his seven daughters from marauding shepherds at the prototypical watering hole. There is an immediate recognition of what each could give to each other. Exodus 2:21 states: "Moses desired to dwell with Jethro; and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses." It was in Midian that Moses discovered his mission, experiencing the epiphany of the burning bush while tending his father-in-law's flock.

Jethro, Moses' Father-in-Law



Important chapters intervene as Moses returns to Egypt and vitiates the reign of Pharaoh. After the crossing of the Red Sea, Moses reunites with his family, who had earlier returned to Midian while he led the Israelites out of the land of servitude. Jethro exclaims his approval of Moses' mission and declares his loyalty: "Now I know that the Lord is the greatest of all the gods" (Exodus 18:11). Moses had won over his father-in-law, although moments later Jethro is advising his brilliantly educated son-in-law that he was taking too much responsibility upon himself. Moses listens and appoints judges over his people. Although rarely invoked as one of the principal characters in Israel's destiny, Jethro's influence upon the new nation was profound. He was, as much as Zipporah, Moses's "helpmate."

Jethro was a priest (2:16), had a knowledge of the one true God. Those Kenites from whom the Rechabites came were descended from him (1 Ch 2:55; s. Jer 35).

Jethro, Moses' Father-in-Law

Exodus 18 – The Counsel of Jethro

v1-6 Jethro brings Moses' Family to Him

2 And **Jethro, Moses' father-in-law**, took Moses' wife **Zipporah**, ^{= bird} after he had sent her away, 3 and her two sons, of whom one ^{= foreigner} was named **Gershom**, **for** he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land." 4 And the other was named **Eliezer**, ^{= God is help} **for** he said, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh."



Exodus 15:22-18:27

The Lord Provides for His People

 Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

Exodus 18 – The Counsel of Jethro

v1-6 Jethro brings Moses' Family to Him

5 Then **Jethro, Moses' father-in-law**, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was camped, at the mount of God. 6 And he sent word to Moses, "**I, your father-in-law Jethro**, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her."

Exodus 15:22-18:27

The Lord Provides for His People

 Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

Exodus 18 – The Counsel of Jethro

v7-12 Jethro Rejoices over God's Goodness to Israel

7 Then Moses went out to meet **his father-in-law**, and he bowed down and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare, and 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 befallen them on the journey, and *how* the LORD had delivered them.



Exodus 15:22-18:27

The Lord Provides for His People

 Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

The two stories in Exodus 18 concern the observations of Jethro. In the first story, he observes what the Lord has done. In the second story, he observes what Moses is doing.

Jethro praises what the Lord has done (18:1-12)

Jethro "heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people." This is the key line that ties the two stories in Exodus 18 together. This refrain, or something similar, appears in the first story in 18:1, 8 and 9, and in the second story in 18:14. In each case, information is coming to Jethro about what someone, either God or Moses, has done on behalf of people.

The names of Moses' sons indicates his growth as a man. The first name was Gershom, which means "A Stranger There." It signifies Moses' woes as an alien in a foreign land after he had fled from Egypt. The name memorialized Moses' plight. But his second son he named Eliezer, which means "My God is Help." Though he was an alien, he came more and more to realize that God was helping him, so the second name memorialized not his plight but God, who helped him through his plight. This is similar to

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what was recorded in Chapter 17. Moses memorialized the first episode there by giving the place man-oriented names that commemorated his plight (17:7), but he memorialized the second episode by giving an altar a God-oriented name that commemorated the Lord, who helped him through the plight (17:15). We'll get a further opportunity to see Moses grow as he responds to the critique of Jethro in 18:24-27.

Both Jethro and Moses inquire of the other's welfare. How wonderful it makes us feel when someone inquires of our welfare in an honest, caring and non-formulaic manner. When we know that someone cares enough to ask about us, it makes us feel great.

This is a wonderful opportunity for Moses - to tell his father-in-law what the Lord has done. These are among the great moments in our lives - when we are given opportunities to share with an interested party what we have seen the Lord do in our lives and in the lives of the people we love. This is intimate fellowship.

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This is also honest fellowship, which is also the only kind of real fellowship. Moses tells Jethro of "all the hardship that had befallen them on the journey." He doesn't sugar-coat it. He tells Jethro that life has been hard. We sometimes get the idea that as followers of Jesus, life shouldn't be hard or that the joy of following Jesus should be so great that it overwhelms the hardness to the point that pain is no longer felt. So if we have trouble overcoming hardship, we may feel embarrassed about it. But we have the freedom to be honest with people, to tell them that life has been hard and not be embarrassed about it. To share about one's difficulties and find a sympathetic, caring ear may be the choicest fellowship of all. It draws us together intensely and establishes intense bonds.

Yet Moses is also able to tell Jethro that "the Lord delivered them." This is what the Lord does - he delivers. Invariably, at some point we will be able to say, "Yes, it was hard, but the Lord delivered me. I am not where I was. I am not who I was." Again, this is sweet.

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Exodus 18 – The Counsel of Jethro

v7-12 Jethro Rejoices over God’s Goodness to Israel

9 And Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, in delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians. 10 **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**. 11 **Now** I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; **indeed**, it was proven **when** they dealt proudly against the people."

12 **Jethro, Moses' father-in-law**, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with **Moses' father-in-law** before God.

Exodus 15:22-18:27

The Lord Provides for His People

 Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

Jethro is ecstatic about what the Lord has done. He rejoices over what the Lord has done (18:9), he praises the Lord for what he has done (18:10), he acknowledges the superiority of the Lord (18:11) and he offers sacrifices to the Lord (18:12).

Moses' phrase "all the hardship" is contrasted with Jethro's phrase "all the goodness." **Scripture affirms these two truths: 1) Life is hard. 2) God is good.** To us, they seem contradictory. But in a way perhaps beyond our total comprehension, hardship in no way means that God is not good. The Lord is good, and remains good through the hardship. He never stops being good.

First, Jethro rejoices, or delights in, what the Lord has done for Israel. This is a response borne out of a deep concern for Moses and his people. An emotional expression of that concern bubbles up out of Jethro. When someone is legitimately excited about something that is happening in our lives, it makes our hearts sing. It must have made Moses' heart sing to see Jethro rejoicing.

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Second, Jethro blesses the Lord. This is the same word that is used when it is said that the Lord blesses man. When God blesses man, he gives to him in some way. When man blesses God, he recognizes God as the source of blessing. So when Jethro "blesses" the Lord, he's praising the Lord. The Apostle Paul does the same thing in Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ..."

Third, Jethro acknowledges the superiority of the Lord, proclaiming that he is "greater than all gods." This is something that Jethro now "knows." God wants to be known. This is clearly seen in the book of Exodus, where he wants not only the Israelites to know him but the Egyptians as well. Jethro's statement contains echoes of the familiar Exodus refrain from the mouth of the Lord: " ... that you may know ... that I am the Lord." Jethro, a pagan Midianite, and a pagan Midianite priest at that, now says he knows this, and he proclaims the Lord's superiority over all gods. He's agreeing with the Israelites, who sang rhetorically, "Who is like thee among the gods, O Lord?" (15:11).

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Fourth, Jethro offers up a burnt offering and sacrifices to God. A burnt offering was representative of full devotion to God. In making these sacrifices, then, Jethro is offering up his life to the Lord. Based on what he has seen the Lord do in the lives of the Israelites, he devotes himself to the Lord. This is the kind of thing that can happen when others get a good look at what the Lord is doing in our lives.

Then the Israelite leaders share a meal with Jethro. Sharing a meal was the highest form of fellowship. And they share the meal in the presence of God, no less. So the sweet fellowship between Jethro and Moses reaches its peak here as others join in and God pulls up a chair. Can life get any better than this?

What is it that has caught Jethro's attention? It is what the Lord has done to Egypt on behalf of the Israelites. This shows Jethro not only how powerful the Lord is but how loving he is as well.

The Lord hasn't delivered us from bondage to Egypt, but he has delivered us from bondage to sin (Romans 6:6), and he continues to

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deliver us. And so people will have the opportunity to view God's great work of deliverance in our lives, as we become less dominated by sin and more like Jesus. Often times we don't see it, because we live with ourselves day to day. But if the Spirit of the living God is dwelling inside you, amazing things are happening, even now. And once in a while the Lord will bring a Jethro into our lives to take notice, rejoice and praise the Lord. And that leads us to worship the Lord...

This story also offers strong encouragement for us to be a Jethro in others' lives - to legitimately ask of another's welfare, to watch for the Lord's activity in the life of another, to rejoice over another, to praise the Lord in another's presence, to acknowledge the greatness of the Lord, to enter into intimate fellowship with another in the presence of God. So the Lord will send us Jethros, but we can also be Jethros.

And what was it that Jethro did? He took notice of the greatness of God, as seen in the lives of Moses and the Israelites, and he extolled his greatness. He extolled the greatness of the Lord. He lifted up the Lord, and everyone was able to see his greatness more clearly.

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Exodus 18 – The Counsel of Jethro

v13-27 Jethro's Counsel to Moses

13 And 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**. 14 **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 as *judge* and all the people stand about 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 dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor, and make known the statutes of God and His laws."

Exodus 15:22-18:27

The Lord Provides for His People

 Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

Jethro, then, observes what the Lord has done and is ecstatic. He has a far different reaction when he observes what Moses is doing.

Jethro critiques what Moses is doing (18:13-27)

Moses acts as arbiter of every dispute that the Israelites have, and not surprisingly this activity goes on "from the morning until the evening." Jethro sees all that Moses is doing for the people. This is parallel to his observations about what the Lord had done for the people (18:1, 8, 9). This story also has Jethro in common with the previous story. Therefore, the author intends us to understand them as related. The previous story, in 18:1-12, is therefore important in our understanding of this story.

Jethro uses the same words in his observations of both the Lord and Moses. Both were "doing" something "for the people." Moses, then, is acting just like God, but not in a good way. He is putting himself in the position of God, trying to be God. Whereas Jethro was thrilled with what the Lord had done, he is not thrilled with what Moses is doing. He asks, in so many words, "What are you doing?" and "Why are you doing it?"

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There are at least 600,000 men in the Israelite camp at this point (12:37). But it apparently has never occurred to Moses to ask even one of them to help him with this burdensome task. Apparently it had never occurred to any of the Israelites to suggest that someone help Moses. Oftentimes, it would just never occur to us to do something another way, even if another way would be obviously better. We become culture-bound. We can't see. We do things simply because we've always done them this way.

For us to change our tired old way of doing things, sometimes it takes a fresh pair of eyes. In this story, those eyes belong to Jethro. What Moses is doing immediately strikes Jethro as odd.

Moses' answer to Jethro's question, "Why are you doing this?" is essentially, "Because the people want me to." That raises the question that the text doesn't ask directly, "Why do the people want him to?" The answer isn't difficult to discern. In the people's minds, Moses is the one with the pipeline to God. He's the one who can solve their problems. He's the expert.

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The culture of Israel is not unlike our culture today. We have developed a culture of so-called "experts." If we have a problem, we read a book by an expert or seek out the advice of an expert. Nothing is wrong with doing these things, but often our motivation is to solve the problem instead of using the problem as an opportunity to know God. **Second**, we fail to avail ourselves of God's greatest therapeutic device: the body of Christ. Because we fail to cultivate mutually caring friendships in the body, we have no one to turn to but an "expert" who we may not even know. And often our problems in the first place are because we haven't cultivated friendships.

Another question to ask is, "Why does Moses do what the people want?" Again, the text neither asks nor answers this question directly, but the answer isn't difficult to discern. Moses might say, "Well, judging the people is an important job, and it's got to be done right. I'm the only one who can do it." Does that sound in any way familiar? We've not only cultivated a culture of experts, we've cultivated a culture of perfectionists - a culture of people obsessed with doing things perfectly...

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Exodus 18 – The Counsel of Jethro

v13-27 Jethro's Counsel to Moses

17 And **Moses' father-in-law** said to him, "The thing that you are doing is not good. 18 You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, **for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.** 19 **Now listen to me: I shall give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people's representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, 20 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.**

1. The Statutes, chukkim, all such precepts as relate to the ceremonies of religion & political economy
2. The Laws, hattoroth – instructions relative to the whole system of morality
3. The Way, 'eth hadderech – that very way, that only way which God Himself has revealed & in which they should walk to please Him
4. The Work, yaasun – they must do it diligently, fervently & effectively.

Exodus 15:22-18:27

The Lord Provides for His People

 Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

How does this story of Jethro relate to the previous story of Jethro? The previous story represented a glorious testimony to the greatness of God. In this story, Moses is trying to be God. But if God is so great, so awesome, so powerful, that means Moses doesn't have to be so great, so awesome, so powerful. Jethro has just told Moses how great God is. If that's true, then Moses doesn't have to break his back from morning to night to make sure everything is done just right. Things aren't nearly so urgent as they appear. The Lord will take care of things. He even turns our mistakes and oversights into beautiful things. That means we can stop obsessing over our mistakes and oversights. And if he does this with our mistakes and oversights, he does so with those of others as well. That means we can let go of things, let others do things without obsessing over whether they're done right. God is able.

Jethro's first response to what the Lord was doing was to rejoice over the Lord's "goodness" (18:9). His first response to what Moses is doing is to tell him that what he is doing is "not good." Again, the grammatical

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parallel is clear. The Lord does something for people, and it's a good thing. Moses does something for people, and it's a bad thing. That's because the Lord is God, and Moses is not.

Jethro explains why what Moses is doing is not good. If he keeps up this pace, he'll wear both himself and the people out, as he sits before them all day and they wait all day to see him. The task is too "heavy" for Moses. This advice represents a continuation of what Moses began to learn in the battle with Amalek, when he needed Aaron and Hur to prop up his hands because they were "heavy" (17:12). **Moses is learning that he needs people to lighten his load. Just like Moses, we need people, too - even those who don't do things exactly the way we want them done (which probably includes everybody!).**

Jethro concludes his evaluation of Moses' actions with the words, **"You cannot do it alone." ...Many of us have been born, bred, educated and inculcated to be independent. To ask for help is a sign of weakness, supposed. But to not ask for help is a sign that we have delusions of deity. Only God doesn't need help. We need help.**

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Exodus 18 – The Counsel of Jethro

v13-27 Jethro's Counsel to Moses

21 "Furthermore, you shall 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, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. 22 And let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, **but** every minor dispute they themselves will judge. **So** it will be easier for you, and 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 these people also will go to their place in peace."

Exodus 15:22-18:27

The Lord Provides for His People

 Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

Exodus 18 – The Counsel of Jethro

v13-27 Jethro's Counsel to Moses

24 **So** Moses listened to **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, leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. 26 And they judged the people at all times; **the difficult dispute they would bring to Moses, but every minor dispute they themselves would judge.** 27 Then Moses bade **his father-in-law** farewell, and he went his way into his own land.

Exodus 15:22-18:27

The Lord Provides for His People

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...After observing the problem, Jethro offers a two-part solution. **First, Moses is to teach all the people "the statutes and the laws" and to "make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do."** If Moses teaches all the people, this will have at least two effects that will likely result in less legal cases: 1) Well-taught people are less likely to be contentious. 2) Well-taught people who are contentious are more likely to be able to work things out on their own. **The application of this advice in the body of Christ is to teach everyone the word of God.**

The first part of the solution is to teach everyone. The second part is to appoint a few. These people will help Moses with the task of judging the people. Jethro instructs Moses to delegate.

But Moses isn't advised to appoint just anyone. The task is indeed important, but there are other qualified people who can do it. **Jethro tells Moses to look for four qualities in appointing judges: They must be "able," they must "fear God," they must be men "of truth" and they must "hate dishonest gain."** In choosing leaders today, often these qualities are not at

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the top of the list. We're easily impressed by flash and image and personality, which are readily discernible at first glance. But true competence, a true reverence for God and integrity often are not so readily apparent.

Letting go of something that we think is important is difficult, but Jethro offers Moses, and us, three incentives: 1) **Simply, it will be "easier" for Moses.** We make life so much more difficult than it needs to be by obsessing over every detail. Letting go of things, allowing them not to be perfect and allowing other people to help us, is a much easier way to live. 2) **The other judges will "bear the burden with you."** This is shared leadership, which is so much more exciting than individual leadership. It's so much more fun to do an important task with people than by yourself. People who share something important get to know each other in a deeper way. 3) **The people will be able to go home "in peace" instead of waiting around all day for a chance to see Moses.** Moses is clinging to responsibility because he doesn't want to disappoint the people, but if he

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lets go of responsibility it will actually be a blessing to people. His thinking has been all wrong, just as ours often is....

In the first story, Jethro heard of "all" that God had "done" (18:1, 8, 9), and it was described as "goodness" (18:9). In the second story, Jethro observed "all" that Moses was "doing" (18:14), but it was "not good" (18:17). **Finally, Moses "did all" that Jethro said**, and although the text specifically doesn't say it was "good," it leaves no doubt that what Moses finally did was good. It is good for him to do all that Jethro said, which means that it's good for him not to do everything....

Letting go

The Lord is perfect in power, infinitely able to do more than we ask or think. Because this is so, we can relax. Because God is perfect, we don't have to be. And we can let others help us.

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I. Stories From Afar: Jethro Hears and Reacts (1-6)

v1 - Once again, the people of Israel are to encounter a pagan nation. This time it's in the form of the priest of Midian. Not only that, it's Moses' father-in-law Jethro. Will there be war again? Why not? He's an in-law! Notice how the narrator packs the first few words of this scene with three names for this character: Jethro, priest of Midian, and Moses' father-in-law. **Who will he be? Will he come as Jethro, friend to Moses? Will he come as Moses' exalted priest of Midian to challenge Moses? Will he come as Moses' father-in-law for a family visit, perhaps with unwanted advice?**

v2-6 - Immediately, one question is answered. Note that in these verses the priest of Midian is now referred to only as Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. In fact, his designation as priest is now gone from the narrative altogether. This will be a family visit. Jethro gets word through the Sinai Peninsula grapevine that the God of the Israelites has done an incredible work for his son-in-law's people. So Jethro gathers his daughter Zipporah, whom he had given to Moses when Moses fled Egypt in his younger days, and his

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grandsons. Apparently, at some point Moses sent his wife and sons home to Midian, likely for their own protection. Whatever the reason, we find that Jethro gathers them together and sets out toward the wilderness near Mount Sinai, where Israel is camped.

The story slows to give us details about Moses' sons. The older was named Gershom, literally "Resident Alien," and the younger Eliezer, literally "God was my helper." Moses' children are living testimonies to God's work – and they are living in Jethro's house. Like the early church, scattered by persecution, they become the infiltrating presence of God in the unlikeliest of places. In this case, it's the very home of the priest of Midian. It's so like God to place his presence in the presence of pagans through his people: Jacob with Laban, Joseph in the courts of Pharaoh, Moses in the courts of Pharaoh, Daniel with Nebuchadnezzar, Nehemiah with Artaxerxes, Esther with Ahasuerus, Paul in the presence of Caesar.

So Jethro, priest of Midian, yearns to know more. How could this beleaguered and enslaved people possibly have been delivered from the most powerful hand on earth?

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Note too that **Moses' two sons encapsulate not only Moses' life, but also what it means to be Israel, the people of God: neither they, nor we, are citizens of this world. We are resident aliens here. Not only that, it is only by the hand of God that we are delivered from the sword of the evil one and given life in the eternal kingdom of God. These sons are history and theological lessons, all wrapped up in one little family.**

And note that the emphasis here is squarely on family. Reference to Moses' wife and sons have now been repeated three times. Jethro's name has been mentioned four times already, and the fact that he is Moses' father-in-law another four times. The fact that Jethro is the priest of Midian has now been completely subsumed by family ties.

II. Stories in the Home: Moses Welcomes and Tells (7-8)

v7-8 - Moses welcomes his father-in-law with tremendous respect. There seems to be a sincere warmth between these two, and Moses invites Jethro into his home, his tent. It is here that they settle in. **There is a sense of focus, of anticipation as Moses begins to recount the great deeds of**

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YHWH. You can just see Jethro, eyes fixed on Moses, attention galvanized by these fantastic stories. Unbelievable they are were it not for the overwhelming evidence that resides just outside the tent, the nation of Israel, free and thriving under the care of God.

Moses recounts what God had done to the most powerful man on the planet. Then he segues into the hardships that Israel encountered immediately upon deliverance from Egypt. **They entered intensive training in how to depend fully on God. Generations of Jews are now learning to live free in dependence on their Lord God who has freed them, rather than under the tyrannical rule of Egyptian slave masters. On the surface, it would seem to be an easy transition, but in reality, exchanging what has been known generation after generation for the unknown can be terrifying, particularly when the unknown is fraught with dangers and struggle. How could *this* possibly be better? At least in Egypt there was food and water. We have learned, Jethro, that it is God who truly provides all we need.**

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So Moses concludes his fascinating tales by recounting how God provided for Israel's needs in every situation. In reality, God has delivered them twice. **How could they doubt his goodness now? He has met every need, addressed every concern and made every promise to give them the great hope of a land to come and a future in the very presence of God.**

So Moses becomes the first to bear witness of God's great works and character to another individual and another people. For the very first time, barely out of the gates of Egypt, Israel is functioning as she was created. **As the stories of God's goodness and deliverance spread, the curiosity of the people of the nations is aroused, and they want to know more. Or else they want to attack. Note that God does not speak or act directly in this entire scene. But the stories of his great work stand as powerful testimony to his loyal-love.**

Where has God placed us to tell the stories? To arouse curiosity? To give testimony when God opens the door and sets the stage? Are we afraid people will react negatively and persecute us? They will indeed! But there

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are also those whose hearts have been prepared by the Spirit to hear the testimony and respond. If we will not tell them, who will? We are not responsible for conversion, we are responsible to plant the seed.

Now, what about Jethro? How does he respond to the stories of God? Will he scoff? Will he react with bemused indifference? Will he embrace the God of Israel?

III. The Impact of Story: Jethro Responds (9-12)

v9-11 - Jethro is thrilled! He rejoices in what YHWH has accomplished. He responds with wonder and expresses great delight in beautiful fashion:

“Blessed be the Lord
who delivered you (pl)

from (*min*)

from (*min*)

who delivered the people
from (*min*) *under*

the *hand* of the Egyptians
the *hand* of Pharaoh,
the *hand* of the Egyptians.

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Now I know
that (*ki*) the Lord is greater
indeed, it was proven
when (*ki*) they dealt proudly against the people.”
than (*min*) all the gods;

Jan Fokkemann helped me to see that Jethro’s response is deeply considered and carefully represents the truths he has discovered. **The first portion expresses reality and gratitude that YHWH separated the oppressed from the oppressor. The One true God trumps the weighty, oppressive hand of great nations and rulers. The second portion uses hymnic language to express the incomparability and uniqueness of YHWH. It all adds up to Jethro’s confession of faith and desire to join the chosen people of God!**

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No gods, not even those of all-powerful Egypt, could compete with the God of Israel. Notice one of the key words here: **the Hebrew *yad*, meaning “hand” or “strength,” is used three times by Jethro, stressing the earthly power of Egypt and Pharaoh and thereby magnifying God to even greater heights in his deliverance.** The third hand is found in combination with *tachat* (under), expressing a strong, painful and constant suppression of Israel. Her deliverance is big news on the world scene. CNN, Fox, CBS, NBC, ABC, MSNBC, PBCC, all the major news organizations would be broadcasting 24 by 7 on location were they around in that day. This is big stuff!

And Jethro does not stop here. Not only does he give public praise to YHWH, but he becomes a worshipper and follower of God and enters into the community of faith.

v12 - Identified for the seventh time as Moses’ father-in-law, we see why Jethro’s old identity has been consumed within the story. We have the privilege of witnessing his transformation from priest of Midian to a

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worshiper of YHWH. He is so overwhelmed by these stories of God's faithfulness and deliverance that he responds with worship. The story then crescendos with Jethro feasting with the Elders of Israel. This pagan priest has entered the community of YHWH!

Israel is functioning as Israel should: tell of God's goodness and the nations will be drawn to the family and desire to enter in. What a feast this must have been, a time of pure celebration as an outsider reflects back to Israel the greatness of God. The simplicity of the scene is remarkable. God is so great that simply telling the stories of his *hesed*, his loyal-love, creates a winsome and fragrant aura that is irresistible to Jethro.

Now, there's another twist to the story upon which we haven't yet touched. It turns out that **Jethro is a descendent of Keturah, Abraham's wife at the end of his life (Gen 25). Just before he died, Abraham left his inheritance with Isaac, God's chosen seed. To his other sons, including Midian, who was born by Keturah, he gave gifts and then sent them away eastward, to the land of the east. Anytime we see this motif in scripture it is**

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symbolic of one moving away from the promise, away from God's blessing, just as Adam and Eve were banished from the garden to the east in Genesis 3. What's exciting about this passage is that we are seeing that even the sons of Abraham who were not included in the covenant are now fully welcomed to enter in. **Now that Israel has been formed and birthed by God, they are to throw open the doors to all who will come to worship YHWH. Far from being exclusionary, the Covenant is open to all who will enter.**

Israel now stands on the threshold of receiving the law from God; Moses is soon to ascend Mt Sinai to meet with God. It is important to note that before the law is given to Israel, as Terence Fretheim says, the basic confessional identity of the community of faith is made clear: the law will come out of the context of an already existing community of faith in which God's redemptive acts are central. The nation's purpose is played out well prior to the law; good news and redemption come before law. The law then comes to help the people understand how to live as the people and community of God.

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The scene ends with Jethro feasting, literally “eating bread,” with the elders of Israel. What a banquet that must have been. What a celebration, as they experienced first hand the amazing grace of YHWH spreading to other peoples and nations. I can’t help but think of another feast that occurred on the eve of a world-changing event. I’m reminded of **Jesus, celebrating the Passover Feast with his disciples**. They ate the Passover meal together, and like Jethro and the elders of Israel, celebrated Israel’s deliverance. Then Jesus broke bread and took his community of followers to a whole new level: “This is my body, this is my blood.” This is the feast of the Kingdom. Embrace the broken body of Christ, accept the cleansing blood of the lamb. If you’ve never entered the feast, what’s holding you back? It’s free. Come on inside the tent of life. And for those of us who have entered in, may God grant us the privilege of feasting in celebration with those who have come anew and entered the banquet of life.

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Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

The Great Story changes lives, communities and nations

There's a reason the Gospel is called the gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is the greatest story ever told and has the power to change lives, communities and even nations. Tell the story and let the story be the story. It is the story God has crafted to bring the nations to himself. Tell Jesus' story and tell your story—how the love of Jesus Christ redeemed you and gave you life. In all of us is the desire to be a part of something greater, something larger than our own stories as individuals. That story is the one being crafted by our heavenly Father. When you tell of the Great Story and the role in that story your Father has given you, you open up a world to others that transcends everyday existence. When you tell the story, you step outside of time and partake of a higher purpose that has eternal meaning and lasting impact.

When you tell the stories of God's redemption, you will likely get one of three responses: 1) people will want to go to war with you, 2) they will react with indifference, 3) they will rejoice with you and want to enter in. You never know which it will be until you tell the stories.

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Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

The stories of God stand without justification, proof or rationalization

The stories of God stand without justification, proof or rationalization. God calls us to tell the stories—our stories and what he has done for us, our families and the community of Christ. Sometimes we hesitate because there is no logical explanation, no way to fit it into a grid that is reasonable and manageable on a human scale, no way to tell it without some people looking more than a little suspect and wondering what was in our cereal that morning. But I have great news...it doesn't matter! Just tell the stories, about Jesus and what he did and then about what he has done in your life.

As Walter Brueggemann says: “Israel was never to forget that its life consisted of being utterly amazed that it was given life in a context where there was no real life on the horizon. Israel’s mode of faith was simply to tell (sapar) without justification, proof, or rationalization. There are no larger criteria of categories that make this odd turn of affairs any more credible or palatable.”

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Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

Exodus: Redemption and Revelation

The Redemption of God's People from Egypt (Exodus 1-18)

Bondage in Egypt (Exodus 1:1-6:27)

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- [1:1-7 The Setting](#)
- [1:8-14 The Slavery](#)
- 8 The Pharaoh
- 9-10 The Plot
- 11-14 The Persecution
- [1:15-22 The Slaying](#)
- 15-16 The Charge
- 17 The Contravention
- 18 The Consternation
- 19 The Cleverness
- 20-21 The Commendation
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[2:11-25 The Deliverer Prepared](#)

- [2:11-14 Moses in Egypt](#)
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- [2:1-4 The Parturition of Moses](#)
- 1 Moses' Parents
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[4:18-31 The Deliverer Sent](#)

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- 18 Jethro Blesses Moses
- 19-23 The LORD Instructs Moses
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Exodus: Redemption and Revelation

The Redemption of God's People from Egypt (Exodus 1-18)

Redeemed from Egypt (Exodus 6:28-18:27)

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