

Jethro Helps Moses

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Scene Summary

The story of how “Jethro Helps Moses” illustrates God’s loving care for His people. The scenes include a reunion...Moses is reunited with his family and encouraged...Jethro is excited to hear all the good things that the LORD had done for His people...Jethro observes how Moses instructs and gives judgments for the people...Jethro suggests a better way to make the burden easier for everyone...Moses listens and takes this good advice.

Scripture

(Exo 18 NIV) Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard of everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. {2} After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro received her {3} and her two sons. One son was named Gershom, for Moses said, "I have become an alien in a foreign land"; {4} and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, "My father's God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh." {5} Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses' sons and wife, came to him in the desert, where he was camped near the mountain of God. {6} Jethro had sent word to him, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons." {7} So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other and then went into the tent. {8} Moses told his father-in-law about everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the LORD had saved them. {9} Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. {10} He said, "Praise be to the LORD, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. {11} Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly." {12} Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God. {13} The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. {14} When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?" {15} Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek

God's will. {16} Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and laws." {17} Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. {18} You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. {19} Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. {20} Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. {21} But select capable men from all the people--men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain--and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. {22} Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. {23} If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied." {24} Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. {25} He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. {26} They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves. {27} Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country.

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Players

- **Narrator** – The play's "catechist" or teacher should be a good reader with a clear voice.
- **Moses** – This person is played with humility and yet commands great authority.
- **Zipporah** – Moses' wife has a non-speaking part. She is happy to be with her husband.
- **Jethro** – Moses' father in law, played as an older person.
- **Person 1, 2, 3, 4** – More people can be added as needed.
- **Messenger** – Running in, out of breath, this person carries a brief but important message.

Special Props

- Normal items from the prop box such as cloaks, veils, robes and headdresses.

Script - Jethro Helps Moses

Narrator: The people of Israel were excited to be free from being slaves in Egypt. In Egypt, their work was very hard and someone was always telling them what they had to do. God had freed the people of Israel from being slaves and had made Moses their leader. Moses told the people God's laws but there were so many people that needed help.

[Moses sitting at a table and people standing in line to speak to him]

Person 1: [angry] One of my neighbor's sheep strayed into my field and ate a bunch of my best grapes. That was wrong.

Person 2: I came and got my sheep. I was sorry. That is all I can do.

Moses: [to Person 2] No, you must make it right. You must make restitution. You must give back to your neighbor what your sheep ate, from the best of your vineyard.

[Moses motions for the next people]

Person 3: [upset] I let my neighbor borrow my ox to plow their field. I went back home. The ox died while they were plowing and now I don't have anything to work my field.

Person 4: [upset] That old ox would have died anyway. It is not my fault that it died.

Person 3: [angry] Yes you are. It is your fault.

Person 4: [angry] No its not. It was not my fault.

Moses: Quiet please. If a man borrows an animal from his neighbor and it is injured or dies while the owner is not present, he must make restitution. But if the owner is with the animal, the borrower will not have to pay.

Narrator: The people stood in line from morning to evening, waiting on Moses to decide their case. [pause] One day a messenger came to Moses

Messenger: [comes running in and bows] Your father-in-law Jethro says: "I am coming to you with your wife and her two sons."

[Jethro, Moses' wife and two sons come on the scene]

Moses: [gets up and goes to meet them] Greeting! [Bows very low] Welcome everyone! [they greet each other] Please, come into my tent. I want to tell you everything that has happened. God has delivered us from Egypt and kept us safe.

Narrator: Moses told Jethro all of the details about the 10 plagues on the Egyptians especially the last plague and the Passover. Moses told about crossing the Red Sea and how God had destroyed the Egyptian army.

Moses: God has given us food and water in the desert.

Jethro: Praise be to the LORD, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods, for He did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly.

Narrator: The next day Moses took his seat to judge the people. Jethro watched as the people gathered in front of Moses' tent. They wanted Moses to decide their problems. The line quickly became very long. This was going to be another long day, telling the people God's rules.

Jethro: What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?

Moses: Because the people come to me to seek God's will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and laws.

Jethro: What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone.

Moses: But what can I do?

Jethro: Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform.

Moses: This is what I have been doing. It is very hard work.

Jethro: Select capable men from all the people--men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain--and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you.

Moses: That is a very good idea.

Jethro: If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied."

Narrator: Moses listened to the good advice from Jethro. Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country.

The End.

Supplemental information

When Moses was forty years old, he ran away from Egypt into the desert. In the desert Moses came to outskirts of a place called Midian and probably stopped for a drink at the city well. Jethro was the priest in Midian. He had seven daughters. Jethro's daughters went to that well to get water for their father's sheep. They were trying to fill the water troughs for their father's sheep, but some shepherds came and chased the girls away. Then Moses defended the girls and watered their sheep. They went back to their father. Jethro asked them, "Why have you come home early today?" The girls answered, "The shepherds chased us away. But an Egyptian defended us. He got water for us and watered our sheep. He asked his daughters, "Where is this man? Why did you leave him? Invite him to eat with us." This is the story of how Moses met Jethro, found in Exodus chapter two.

Moses agreed to stay with Jethro. Jethro was probably grateful to Moses for protecting his daughters. He takes Moses in, gives him a job as a shepherd. Later, Moses married one of Jethro's daughters, Zipporah. Zipporah, from the Hebrew means a *female bird*, or a *small bird*. She bears Moses two sons, Gershom and Eliezer.

God calls Moses to go back to Egypt and tell the Pharaoh to "let my people go." Moses was 80 years old. He had lived in Midian for 40 years. Moses apparently goes back to Egypt without his family, leaving them with Jethro. In this story, Moses' family is united again.