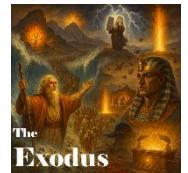




Listening to God Exodus 18:21-18:27 (Lesson #18)



As we come to Exodus 18, you may notice that this chapter feels a bit out of place. Many believe that the events recorded here actually happened after the giving of the Ten Commandments.

It seems Moses includes this account as a kind of parenthesis, pulling together some important themes before moving into the major sequence of the covenant and all that follows. Let me show you why this may be the case. In Numbers 10, Moses recounts how Israel departed from Mount Sinai:

'In the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, the cloud lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony. And the people of Israel set out by stages from the wilderness of Sinai. And the cloud settled down in the wilderness of Paran.' (Num. 10:11-12, ESV)

Later in that same chapter, we read of Moses' interaction with Hobab (AKA- Jethro), his father-in-law:

'29 And Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will do good to you, for the LORD has promised good to Israel.' 30 But he said to him, "I will not go. I will depart to my own land and to my kindred." 31 And he said, "Please do not leave us, for you know where we should camp in the wilderness, and you will serve as eyes for us. 32 And if you do go with us, whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same will we do to you.'" (Nu 10:29-32 ESV)

At the end of Exodus 18, we read:

'Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went away to his own country.' (Ex. 18:27, ESV)

So, while it is not entirely clear when Jethro (also called Hobab) arrived or departed, it is evident that his leaving coincided with Israel's departure toward the Promised Land.

In this way, at least part of Exodus 18 seems to be telescoped. Whether the timing is exact or thematic, the point remains: Moses places this account here to highlight God's wisdom in leadership and the importance of shared responsibility.

18:1 ¶ 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 18:1 serves as a narrative bridge, marking the transition from Israel's journey through the wilderness to their arrival at the "**Mountain of God.**"

Having spent forty years as a fugitive in Midian, Moses now returns not as a humble shepherd, but as the leader of a liberated nation. The text identifies **Jethro** by his dual titles: "**the priest of Midian**" and "**Moses' father-in-law.**"

Historically, the Midianites were descendants of Abraham through his second wife, Keturah (Gen 25:1-2), suggesting that Jethro may have preserved a vestigial knowledge of the patriarchal God, even if filtered through Midianite culture.

The report Jethro receives focuses on two specific areas: what God had done "**for Moses**" (personal deliverance) and "**for Israel**" (national deliverance).

It has been roughly two months since the Exodus began—a timeline inferred from **Exodus 19:1**, which places Israel at Sinai in the third month. While the text uses the general name for God, *Elohim*, it specifically emphasizes that it was **Yahweh** (the LORD) who orchestrated the exit from Egypt.

The mechanism by which Jethro "heard" (Hebrew: *shama*) is not explicitly stated, but given that Israel was camped near **Horeb**, Moses was back in familiar territory. It is highly probable that Moses sent messengers to Jethro, not merely to share the news of the miracle, but as a formal notification of his return to the region.

This encounter underscores a major theological theme: **The testimony to the Gentiles**. Jethro represents the first "outsider" to hear and respond to the news of the Exodus, foreshadowing how God's works in Israel were intended to be a light to all nations.

Vs 2-4 Now Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her home, 3 along with her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land"), 4 and the name of the other, Eliezer (for he said, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh").

In these verses, the narrative provides a crucial "flashback" that clarifies the status of Moses' family.

While **Exodus 4:20** initially depicted Moses departing for Egypt with his wife and sons on a donkey, we learn here that at some point, he had "**sent her home**". This Hebrew term *shilluach* often refers to a **dismissal** or a **sending away**, sometimes even used in the context of divorce; however, in this setting, it most likely refers to a **protective separation** during the dangerous plagues and the subsequent exodus.

The reunion highlights the names of Moses' sons, which serve as a biographical map of his spiritual journey. **Gershom** (Hebrew: גֵּרְשׁוֹם) is linked to the word *ger*, meaning "**stranger**" or "**sojourner**." This name reflects Moses' first forty years in Midian—a period of exile, isolation, and wandering.

In contrast, the name of the second son, **Eliezer** (Hebrew: אֵלִיְזָר), signals a shift from wandering to deliverance. It is a compound of *Eli* ("my God") and *Ezer* ("help"). Moses specifically ties this name to his narrow escape from the "**sword of Pharaoh**," likely referring to the death sentence he fled in **Exodus 2:15**.

Theologically, these names represent the two pillars of both the Israelite and Christian experiences: the reality of being "**strangers**" in a world that is not their home, while at the same time being citizens of a heavenly home, and the reality of a God who is an active "**Helper**" and "**Deliverer**."

Vs 5 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.

Jethro acts immediately upon the news of the Exodus by traveling to meet the camp of Israel.

The text emphasizes that Jethro brings Moses' wife and sons to him "**in the wilderness**," specifically noting the location: "**at the mountain of God**."

This title refers to **Mount Horeb** (AKA Sinai). This is a profound moment of fulfillment; in **Exodus 3:12**, God had promised Moses at the burning bush, "*When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.*"

Moses is now standing on the very ground where his commission began, but he is no longer a lone shepherd; he is the leader of a redeemed nation.

Jethro's arrival at this specific location signifies that the "**private**" revelation Moses received at the bush is now becoming a "**public**" reality for the nation and the world.

The wilderness—historically a place of testing and isolation—now becomes the site of restoration and the gathering of the family.

Vs 6 And when he sent word to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her,"

As Jethro nears the camp, the scale of what he had “heard” now becomes “sight” and we would imagine that the “seeing” is absolutely overwhelming!

The text notes that Jethro "**sent word**" to Moses before their face-to-face meeting. This was a matter of Ancient Near Eastern protocol; one did not simply walk into the camp of a massive, newly sovereign nation—especially one that had recently defeated the Egyptian army—without a formal announcement.

Equally, it is likely very practical. How would Jethro go about locating Moses in such a massive encampment?

Jethro's message is specific: "**I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming...**" By lead-referencing his relationship to Moses, he establishes his credentials as an ally and a kinsman rather than a potential threat.

The inclusion of Moses' wife and sons in the announcement serves as a "peace offering" of sorts, signaling that this is a visit of restoration and celebration.

It is likely that this message was sent via a messenger while Jethro was still a distance away. For Moses, receiving this word meant that the two halves of his life—his forty years as a shepherd in Midian and his new calling as the Deliverer of Israel—were finally converging at the foot of the mountain of God.

Vs 7-8 Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. And they asked each other of their welfare and went into the tent. 8 Then 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 in the way, and how the LORD had delivered them.

In **verse 7**, we see the meeting of two worlds. Despite his status as the leader of millions, Moses demonstrates profound humility and adherence to **Ancient Near Eastern protocol**.

He "**went out**" to meet Jethro, a sign of high respect, and performed two specific actions: he "**owed down**" and "**kissed him**." The act of bowing was not necessarily an act of worship, but a gesture of (honor) shown to a social superior or a respected elder.

This greeting reminds us that the "man of God" is also a man of family, honoring the fourth commandment before it was even etched in stone at Sinai. Their mutual inquiry into each other's "**welfare**" (Hebrew: **shalom**) signifies more than a polite "hello"; it indicates a seeking of wholeness and peace between their respective houses.

APPLICATION: Just a quick reminder that the Lord calls us, even as adults, to honor our mothers and our fathers (Ex 20:12; Eph 6:1-3).

Once inside the privacy of the **tent**, the atmosphere shifts from social protocol to **witness** (v. 8).

Moses recounts the "all" of the Exodus: the judgment upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, the "hardship" (*tela'ah*) encountered on the journey—likely referring to the bitter waters of Marah, the hunger in the Wilderness of Sin, and the thirst at Rephidim—and finally, the "deliverance" (*natsal*) of Yahweh.

APPLICATION: Just as Yahweh delivered His people then, He still does now:

"When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles." (Ps 34:17 ESV)

Significantly, Moses emphasizes that God acted "**for Israel's sake.**" This is a key theological point: God's judgment of Egypt was not arbitrary, but a covenantal rescue of His people.

APPLICATION: It is a simple fact that God always acts on behalf of His people (Rom 8:28-30; I Cor 10:13).

Moses does not gloss over the struggle; he presents a balanced testimony that acknowledges the reality of suffering while magnifying the certainty of God's rescue.

Vs 9 And Jethro rejoiced for all the good that the LORD had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

The response of Jethro to Moses' testimony is summarized in a single, powerful verb: "**rejoiced.**" The Hebrew root used here is *chadah*, a relatively rare term in the Pentateuch that denotes a **deep, penetrating gladness**—a joy that "brightens" the countenance.

Jethro's joy is not centered on his own family's safety, but on "**all the good**" (*tobah*) that Yahweh had performed for Israel.

Specifically, he celebrates the "hand" of Yahweh being stronger than the "**hand of the Egyptians.**" This is a moment of profound **missiological significance**.

Jethro, a Gentile priest, is moved to worship by the story of God's grace toward a different nation. His reaction serves as a fulfillment of God's original promise to Abraham that "*all the families of the earth shall be blessed*" through him (Gen 12:3). Jethro's joy is a precursor to the "**great joy**" that the Gospel would eventually bring to all nations.

APPLICATION: Two quick points here. Jethro's "great joy" should remind us of the ultimate "great joy" that is found in the Messiah. First:

"And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:8-11, ESV)

Second, we too should rejoice with those who are rejoicing in the Lord.

"Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." (Ro 12:15 ESV)

Vs 10-11 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 has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. 11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people."

Vs 10 - Jethro responds not with a compliment to Moses' leadership, but with a **doxology** (a prayer of praise) directed solely to Yahweh.

He uses the Hebrew formula **Baruk Yahweh** ("Blessed be the LORD"). By using the tetragrammaton (**YHWH**), the specific covenant name of Israel's God, Jethro acknowledges that the deliverance was not the work of Moses or some generic deity, but the specific intervention of Yahweh, the God who revealed Himself at the burning bush.

He emphasizes the threefold "hand" from which Israel was snatched: the hand of the **Egyptian people**, the hand of **Pharaoh**, and the general "**under the hand**" (the systemic oppression) of the Egyptian Empire.

Vs 11 - Jethro moves from praise to a profound **confession of faith**: "**Now I know.**" This phrase suggests a transition from intellectual awareness to experiential certainty.

As a "**priest of Midian**," Jethro likely had a wide knowledge of the various deities of the Ancient Near East. However, the Exodus proved that Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews is "**greater than all gods.**"

The proof of Yahweh's greatness was found in the poetic justice of the plagues: because Egypt "**dealt arrogantly**" with Israel—presuming their gods were superior—Yahweh used their own pride to dismantle them.

This is the "measure for measure" justice of God; the very waters the Egyptians used to drown Hebrew infants (Ex 1:22) became the instrument of their own destruction at the Red Sea.

As Egypt sought to destroy the Hebrew male children in the Nile, Yahweh has destroyed the powerful Egyptian army in the Red Sea.

Yahweh has proven that He is the one true and living God, and He is the all-powerful God.

APPLICATION:

"Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable." (Ps 145:3 ESV)

"Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure." (Ps 147:5 ESV)

Vs 12 And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

Following his confession of faith, Jethro transitions from words to action by presiding over a sacrificial feast.

The text notes that Jethro "**brought a burnt offering (olah) and sacrifices (zebachim) to God.**" It is significant that Jethro, as the "Priest of Midian," takes the lead in this ritual.

The Israelite priesthood had not yet been formally codified (which occurs later in Exodus 28 with the appointment of Aaron's line). Here, Jethro acts as a patriarchal priest, much like Melchizedek did for Abraham.

The "burnt offering" (*olah*) is a specific type of sacrifice where the entire animal is consumed by fire, symbolizing total consecration to God.

The burnt offering first also appears with Noah after the flood:

"Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar." (Ge 8:20, ESV)

It reappeared with Abraham:

"He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.'" (Gen 22:2, ESV)

Yet, it's ultimate fulfillment is in Christ:

"And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together." (Gen. 22:7–8, ESV)

"And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." (Eph. 5:2, ESV)

This event concludes with a communal meal where **Aaron and all the elders of Israel** join Jethro to "eat bread... before God."

In the Ancient Near East, eating a meal together after a sacrifice was the formal way of sealing a covenant or treaty.

It seems that this was a "Covenant Meal," confirming that the Midianites and Israelites were now in a state of peace (*Shalom*) under the authority of the one true God.

Vs 13 ¶ The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening.

The narrative transition "**the next day**" highlights the contrast between the mountain-top celebration and the mundane, yet exhausting, work of administration.

Moses assumes the role of a judge (*shaphat*), sitting while the people "**stood around him from morning till evening.**"

In the Ancient Near East, the act of "sitting" was the official posture of a king or a judge, symbolizing authority, while the "standing" of the people indicated their status as petitioners.

With a population of approximately two million, the volume of disputes—ranging from personal injuries and interpersonal conflicts—was overwhelming.

This reveals a critical developmental stage for Israel: they were no longer a collection of slaves under Egyptian taskmasters, but a sovereign society requiring **judicial structure**.

Moses was not merely settling arguments; he was acting as the **living oracle of God**, applying divine principles to human conflicts.

However, the phrase "**from morning till evening**" signals a looming crisis—not of character, but of **capacity**. Moses had become a bottleneck for justice, creating a situation that was unsustainable for both the leader and the nation.

Vs 14 When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?"

Jethro's observation begins with a comprehensive look at "**all that he (Mose) was doing**." The Hebrew text emphasizes the "**doing**" (*asah*), highlighting the sheer activity and labor involved.

Jethro's intervention is framed by two piercing questions that address the **method** and the **isolation** of Moses' leadership. He asks, "**What is this that you are doing?**" followed by the more critical observation, "**Why do you sit alone?**"

Jethro recognizes a dangerous pattern: Moses is the sole mediator of justice for millions. The phrase "**sit alone**" stands in stark contrast to the previous day's communal meal, where Moses was surrounded by Aaron and the elders.

Moses standing alone as the only mediator between God and the people points forward to the Lord Jesus, who is the one and only mediator between God and men:

"For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," (1 Timothy 2:5 ESV)

But, the difference is obvious; Moses is a man and in that sense he cannot do this work alone.

Jethro sees that while the "mountain-top" worship was shared, the "valley" work of service has become a solitary burden.

By pointing out that the people stand "**from morning till evening**," Jethro isn't just worried about Moses' health; he is concerned about the **inefficiency** of the system.

A leader who acts as the only bottleneck for God's wisdom eventually hinders the people's access to that very wisdom.

Vs 15-16 And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God; 16 when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws."

Moses justifies his exhaustive schedule by explaining the spiritual nature of the people's requests.

He uses the phrase "**to inquire of God**." In the ancient world, to "**inquire**" was to seek a divine oracle or a definitive word from the Creator to resolve a human dilemma.

Moses views himself not merely as a secular judge, but as a "link" between the heavens and the earth.

When a **"dispute"** (*dabar*—literally **"a matter"** or **"a word"**) arises, Moses believes he must be the one to decide because he is the one to whom God speaks.

Moses identifies a two-fold task in his judging:

1. **Resolution:** He decides between **"one person and another."**
2. **Education:** He makes them **"know the statutes of God and his laws."** It is important to note that at this point in the Exodus narrative, the formal Law (the Ten Commandments) has not yet been given at Sinai.

In this entire event we see the structure of the Old Covenant and its fulfillment in the New. The people stood before Moses to be taught the laws and statutes.

APPLICATION: Promise of the New Covenant:

"10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 11 And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest." (Heb 8:10-11 ESV)

Vs 17-18 Moses' father-in-law said to him, **"What you are doing is not good. 18 You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone.**

Jethro's assessment is startlingly direct: **"The thing you are doing is not good."** In the context of the Torah, this is a heavy phrase. It echoes **Genesis 2:18**, where God declared it was **"not good"** for man to be alone.

Here, Jethro applies that same principle to leadership. He identifies a double-edged crisis: the **exhaustion of the leader** and the **frustration of the people**. The Hebrew verb used for **"wear yourselves out"** is vivid; it literally means to **wither, fade, or decay like a leaf**.

It suggests that Moses' current pace isn't just tiring—it is corrosive to his spirit and to the nation's patience.

Jethro describes the task as **"too heavy."** This is the same root used for "glory" and "heaviness." While Moses' calling was glorious, the administrative weight was becoming a crushing burden.

Jethro observes that by **"doing it alone,"** Moses has created a system where the "elders" (mentioned in verse 12) are sitting on the sidelines while the leader drowns in the details.

Jethro's wisdom is in realizing that a leader's greatest failure is often not a lack of effort, but a lack of **structure and delegation.**

Vs 19-20 *Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God, 20 and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do.*

Jethro's advice begins with a formal call to attention: **"Obey my voice; I will give you advice."**

This is not a command of a superior, but the counsel of a mentor. He offers a conditional blessing—"and God be with you"—suggesting that God's presence and blessing are often found in wisdom and order rather than in chaotic over-exertion.

Jethro proposes that Moses shift his focus from being a "judge of every case" to being a **mediator** and a **teacher**.

In **verse 19**, Moses is told to "*represent the people before God.*" The Hebrew phrase implies standing "opposite" or "in front of" God as an advocate.

Moses' primary role is to handle the cases that require a direct word from the Lord—the "hard cases" that establish precedent.

In **verse 20**, Jethro defines the leader's highest calling: **education**. Moses is to "*warn*" and "*make them know*" the way to walk. The goal is to move the nation from a state of **dependence** (waiting for Moses to tell them what to do) to a state of **discernment** (knowing the Law well enough to walk in it themselves).

Statute – **תַּנִּינָה choq**: A masculine noun meaning regulation, law, ordinance, decree, custom. Derived from a root meaning "to engrave." These are often "decrees" or "ordinances" where the reason isn't always explained. They are given simply because the Sovereign has decreed them (e.g., dietary laws).

Law - **תּוֹרָה torah**: Derived from a root meaning "to shoot" or "to point." This refers to "instruction" or "teaching." It is the broader body of wisdom that points a person toward the right way to live.

Vs 21-23 Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. 22 And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. 23 If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace."

Jethro begins by defining the **qualifications** for leadership. He uses the term "**able men**" which implies men of **strength, valor, and substance**.

However, the true strength Jethro seeks is moral, not physical. These leaders must possess three non-negotiable traits: they must "**fear God**" (a vertical priority), be "**trustworthy**" (a horizontal priority), and "**hate a bribe**" (an internal priority of integrity).

APPLICATION: God hates bribes. They undermine and ultimately destroy justice (Ex. 23:8; Deut. 16:19).

By requiring that they "hate" dishonest gain, Jethro ensures that the judicial system cannot be bought by the wealthy, protecting the justice of the poor.

The **structure** Jethro proposes is a mathematical hierarchy: thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. This created a highly accessible system where every ten families had a dedicated leader.

This is the first recorded instance of a **representative judiciary** in Israel's history. The "**small matters**" common disputes over property or personal injury—were handled at the local level, while the "**great matters**" were escalated to Moses.

In **verse 23**, Jethro provides the "why" behind the plan. He links Moses' obedience to this wisdom with the ability to "endure" (*amad*—to stand firm).

Furthermore, he notes the impact on the nation: the people will go to their places in "peace" (*shalom*). When justice is slow, people are restless; when justice is accessible and local, the community finds rest.

Vs 24-26 So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. 25 Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. 26 And they judged the people at all times. Any hard case they brought to Moses, but any small matter they decided themselves.

The narrative records a vital moment of character for the man of God: "**So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law.**"

Despite being the one who stood before Pharaoh and parted the Red Sea, Moses remained teachable. He did not let his unique spiritual status blind him to practical wisdom. Moses followed Jethro's plan in its entirety, selecting "**able men**" and establishing the tiered judicial hierarchy of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.

APPLICATION: True wisdom is valuable no matter who speaks it. Even someone who may not like us, or who brings a charge against us, might still be speaking the truth. Like Moses, we must remain humble and teachable.

The result was a transformative shift in the camp's daily life. These newly appointed heads "**judged the people at all times,**" providing immediate, local access to justice.

This created a filter: the "**hard cases**" those involving complex legal precedents or direct divine inquiries—still reached Moses, but the "**small matters**" were resolved instantly.

This restructuring turned a "one-man show" into a sustainable community, allowing Moses to focus on his primary calling as the nation's prophet and intercessor. By the way, Moses serves as an amazing picture (type) of the Lord Jesus.

Vs 27 Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went away to his own country.

The chapter concludes with a formal and amicable departure.

Jethro's mission was complete: he had witnessed the power of Yahweh, confessed his faith, participated in a covenant meal, and helped Moses establish a sustainable government.

His return to "**his own country**" (Midian) highlights that while he was an ally and a believer in Yahweh, he remained a distinct leader of his own people. This departure ensures that the focus of the upcoming chapters remains solely on the covenant between Yahweh and Israel at Sinai.
