



## MORDEKAI'S DRASH — YITRO

**Torah:** *Yitro* (Jethro/abundance), *Sh'mot* (Exodus) 18.1-20.23(26)

**Haftorah:** *Yesh'a'yahu* (Isaiah) 6.1-7.6, 9.5(6)-6(7)

**Suggested Messianic Writings reading:** *Mattityahu* (Matthew) 5.8-20

Shalom,

It is known that the Hebraic style of writing in the Tanakh is not necessarily chronological, as opposed to the typical Greek style writing that we in the western world are used to. *Sh'mot* 18 is one such possible example. The Sages and scholars have debated back and forth about the timing of the events in this chapter, and why it was placed here in Torah. Most believe that *Yitro* (Jethro), Moshe's father-in-law, came to visit *after* the events at Mt Sinai – giving of the Ten Words (Commandments) and the teachings of Torah to Moshe. This reasoning is given in a couple of verses: verse 5 states the Moshe was encamped at “the mountain of God;” and in verse 16 Moshe explains to Yitro that he is explaining God's laws and teachings to the people, which per the events in the other surrounding chapters had not yet been given.

So if Yitro came to visit *after* the Torah was given to Moshe, why would this chapter be inserted here? Again, the Sages debate, but one possible explanation is that the passage is here to contrast the difference between Amalek, an outsider, or foreigner, who in the previous chapter had come out to launch an unprovoked attack against Israel, and Yitro, the high priest of Midyan, an outsider who came and gave wise counsel to Israel. Centuries later, the descendants of Yitro were blessed by King *Sha'ul* (Saul). This people group was known as the Kenites, who at the time were living in the land controlled by the Amalekites. King *Sha'ul* came to battle Amalek, and he allowed the Kenites to leave, because they had shown kindness to Israel through their ancestor Yitro (*Shmuel Alef*/1 Samuel 15.6).

*Sh'mot* 18.2 says that Yitro had brought Moshe's wife Tzipporah and their two sons out to Moshe; for Yitro had taken them in after Moshe had sent them back. There is nothing previously that had stated anything about Moshe sending his family back, so here is another mystery. Some commentators feel that after the events of *Sh'mot* 4, where ADONI had threatened to kill Moshe, and Tzipporah circumcised their son in an angry confrontation, that Moshe sent her back home, perhaps perceiving that this was about to become a dangerous journey he was undertaking. Other commentators feel that he sent her home because of her belligerence and disrespect of her husband's authority in the family. At any rate, our current chapter is the last we hear of Tzipporah in the Tanakh. The sons of Moshe are only mentioned again in the genealogy listing in 1 Chronicles 23. There is even debate over whether the Ethiopian (or Cushite) woman that Moshe had married, in *B'Midbar* (Numbers) 12, is Tzipporah or not, since Tzipporah and her family were not Ethiopian; the term was sometimes used as a generic term for the general region of Arabia that they came from.

So Yitro had come out for two reasons: to bring Moshe's wife and sons back to him, and because he had heard of all the great things that ADONI had done for Israel when bringing them out of Egypt. Amalek had undoubtedly heard the same report, and here we have a contrast in what the mind and heart of a man will lead him to do. Those whose hearts are angry and spiteful will remain the same, if that is their base desire, and as we saw in the case of Pharaoh, their heart will be *strengthened* in that area. A heart that is dark will only become darker, short of receiving *Light* from the Creator. Amalek came to fight, to defeat a hated enemy. “Midyan” came to help out, to impart wisdom. Both had heard of the miraculous rescue of Israel out of Egypt. The ArtScroll commentary notes that, “Miracles alone do not transform the beliefs of the Amaleks of the world; those who refuse to recognize the hand of God will always interpret events to suit their own purposes.” How true that is. Unfortunately, the ArtScroll commentators – non-Messianic Jews – do the same when it comes to the events surrounding Yeshua.

Yeshua gives us a picture of this contrast between hinder or help in this week's *Messianic Writings* reading, from *Mattityahu* (Matthew) 5, looking at verses 13-14: “You are the salt of the earth,” or as Stern words it in the CJB, “salt for the Land”. Salt is a preservative, and had Amalek used their strength to righteously defend, protect and *preserve* Israel, they would have had a worthy history, but since they chose the opposite, “ADONI will fight Amalek generation after generation” (*Sh'mot* 17.16). On the other hand, Yitro from Midyan encouraged Israel to be a *Light for the world*. His advice to Moshe has lasted for millennia: “You should teach them the laws and the teachings, and show them how to live their lives and what work they should do” (*Sh'mot* 18.20). That is the whole point of Torah, and Yeshua and *Sha'ul* (Saul/Paul) and *Kefa* (Peter) and the others in the Messianic Writings built upon this foundation, as did

the prophets and poets and writers of the Tanakh – Isaiah and David and Hosea and Solomon, and so on – “This is how HaShem wants us to live and work, not as the pagans do, but as He does.”

This world is still given the choice of fighting against ADONI and His people, as did Amalek, or supporting the work of ADONI. We can either be worthy salt and preserve the ways of ADONI, or else become tasteless and worthless to His kingdom. We as believers are to be a light and an example of how to walk in His Light, for we are a city on a hill that cannot be hidden. This is what Torah observance is all about, serving – through love and obedience – the One who created us, whose name is Yeshua. He too lived a Torah observant life. His is the Name above all names (Eph 1.21; Phil 2.9). He is the One who holds the world in His hands; He is the One in control of all, who has all authority. The Father has released all authority into the Son’s hands regarding this planet, and when the Son will return to earth, He will reign for 1000 years and put everything back into the proper order, and “then comes the end, when *He hands over* the kingdom to God the Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet” (1 Cor 15.24-25).

Just as Yitro taught Moshe wise counsel, no doubt Moshe taught Yitro of the true destiny of mankind, and the purpose of ADONI’s Torah, teaching the heavenly way of life, which will culminate in the Messiah, Yeshua, reigning over all people.

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַיִם – *Sha’alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! Pray for those “Yitro’s” to come alongside the leadership of modern Israel and stand with her, giving wise counsel that the leaders will understand and accept. Pray for [spiritual] eyes to be opened to see Yeshua for who He is – Messiah and King of Israel. And pray for the modern day “Amalek’s” who oppose Israel to be defeated.

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah  
(Blessings & thank you very much)

## Mordekhi

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.  
(Acts 1.11 CJB)