



August 30, 2026

Elders from Genesis to Revelation

God's Pattern for His People

Exodus 18:13-23, Acts 14:21-23, Titus 1:5

1. Sermon Outline:

- a. Moses Needed Additional Leaders and God Empowered Israel's Elders for this Work
 - i. Moses and Israel suffered because he was the only leader
 - ii. God shared His Spirit with the elders of Israel
 - iii. The pattern of elders continued, though not always successfully, until the New Covenant
- b. The Pattern Continued in the New Testament As Elders Were Appointed In Newly Formed Churches
- c. This Church Is Continuing to Change to Better Align with God's Pattern for His People

2. *Sunday* – As soon as possible after the sermon, consider:

- a. What stood out to you the most in this sermon?
- b. What new truth did you learn, or what truth were you reminded of?
- c. Is there a particular Scripture passage you feel God is leading you to meditate on or commit to memory?
- d. What is one thing God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
- e. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

3. *Monday*:

- a. Read Exodus 18.
- b. Although the focal passage for this week doesn't start until verse 13, the first twelve verses have valuable background information setting the stage for verses 13 and following.
 - i. First, who was Jethro and what was his occupation?
 - ii. As a "priest of Midian," what would you think his relationship with God was at the beginning of the chapter? Do you think he and the people he served as priest were followers of the true God (although taking place a little later in Moses' life, consider Numbers 22:4-6 and 31:7-8)?
 - iii. What was Jethro's motivation for going to see Moses? Does just knowing some of the great things God has done imply that one is following God as a believer?
 - iv. Who does Jethro bring with him to see Moses?
 - v. Although we are not told, so any answer must be pure speculation, why and when do you think Moses sent his wife and sons back to live with Jethro?

- c. How did Moses respond to news that his father-in-law was coming? How would you describe the reunion?
 - i. After the greetings, what three things did Moses describe to Jethro?
 - ii. Although our stories will never come close to matching that of Moses, how might we use his three points as an outline for our own testimony?
 - iii. What do you think it might have been like to hear Moses describe the events of the Exodus?

4. *Tuesday:*

- a. Read and meditate on Exodus 18:9-12.
- b. What was Jethro's immediate reaction to the report he heard from Moses?
 - i. Is rejoicing at God's good deeds sufficient to show that one is a follower of the true God (think about the possible reaction of a non-believer to the birth of a healthy baby after a difficult pregnancy)?
 - ii. What significant change occurs in verse 10 (consider Romans 10:9-10)?
 - 1. For what two distinct deliverances does Jethro bless God?
 - 2. Thinking about the events that occur during the plagues God brought upon Egypt, from Jethro's position as a father-in-law, which deliverance would he probably have been most concerned about? Why?
 - 3. Which do you consider greatest? Why?
 - 4. Which was most difficult for God?
 - iii. What did Jethro confess in verse 11?
 - 1. In what sense is this a good thing?
 - 2. In what sense does Jethro fall short of a fully acceptable confession?
 - 3. What reason does he give for his new belief (verse 11 in the ESV may be somewhat confusing. Compare it with the NIV or CSB to understand Jethro's response better)?
- c. What action did Jethro take to prove that he was serious about his new belief?
 - i. As the one giving the burnt offering and sacrifices, Jethro probably provided the meal described in verse 12. Thinking about the size of the Israelite community, what might you conclude about the size of this dinner party?
 - ii. What does the phrase "to eat bread" in the ESV translation of verse 12 remind you?
 - iii. How is God's view of Jethro's actions revealed (particularly in the NIV and CSB translations)?

5. *Wednesday:*

- a. Read and meditate on Exodus 18:13-18.

- b. What was Moses' action the morning after the reunion with his father-in-law, wife, and two sons?
 - i. Sometimes Christians use family visits as a reason (excuse) not to attend church services or perform the service they would normally be doing. How do you think Moses would have reacted to such situations?
 - ii. How is Moses demonstrating the truth Jesus taught in Luke 14:26-27?
 - iii. How long of a day did Moses put in?
- c. What was Jethro's reaction to what he saw Moses doing? How would you paraphrase his questions in verse 14?
- d. How did Moses respond to the criticism of his father-in-law? Given everything we know about God's working with and through Moses (burning bush, dealing with Pharaoh, Red Sea, wilderness journey, etc.), how do you feel about the validity of his answer?
- e. And how does Jethro, in turn, respond to Moses?
 - i. Although leading up to a good and proper conclusion, what does Jethro not take into consideration in verse 18 (consider Genesis 18:14a, Job 42:2, Isaiah 40:29, Jeremiah 32:17 & Luke 1:37)?
 - ii. How does the last sentence of verse 18 (in the ESV) apply to us as Christians today? What solution has God graciously provided (see John 14:16)?

6. **Thursday:**

- a. Read and meditate on Exodus 18:19-25.
- b. What advice did Jethro give Moses?
 - i. Within that advice, what four things did Jethro suggest should be Moses' main (or primary) responsibility?
 - 1. Why, or in what manner, should these be priorities for Christian leaders today?
 - 2. In what way does Jethro's advice reflect what Jesus commanded of us in Matthew 28:19-20?
 - ii. How did Jethro propose to ease Moses' workload otherwise?
 - 1. What qualification did Jethro suggest for the men Moses was to select? Does the order in which Jethro presents the qualifications matter? Which would you consider most important?
 - 2. How would you describe the organizational structure Jethro recommends? What role is reserved for Moses?
 - 3. Although not specifically identified as such, when you get down to chiefs "of tens," what are you basically describing? What application do you see to our lives today?

- iii. What assurance did Jethro offer that would ensure that his suggestions would work (verse 23)? Who ultimately would always remain in control?
- c. How does Moses respond?
 - i. What does his response tell us about Moses' character (compare Numbers 12:3)?
 - ii. What lessons should we glean from Moses' response?

7. **Friday:**

- a. Read and meditate on Acts 14:21-23.
- b. How are Paul's mission activities described in these verses conducted in a manner like what Jethro recommended?
 - i. How are the primary responsibilities Jethro laid out for Moses encapsulated by what Paul is described as doing in verse 22?
 - ii. What does Paul do that mirrors the choice of "able men" by Moses?
 - iii. Where does Paul turn to ensure those selected will succeed?
- c. Why was such an approach necessary in the era in which Paul was ministering? What do you think would have happened to these new churches if he had not taken such steps?
- d. Since everyone in these churches was a new Christian, what is implied that Paul must have done with those selected as elders?
- e. Ultimately, what did Paul rely on as he left each church?

8. **Saturday:**

- a. Read and meditate on Titus 1:5.
- b. What two reasons does Paul give for having left Titus in Crete?
- c. How do you see these reasons as similar to what Jethro is telling Moses?
- d. By leaving Titus with these two responsibilities, how is Paul behaving with a character similar to Moses?

9. **Application:** Although many additional applications will be developed as this series of sermons continues, one stands out from Moses' interaction with Jethro: God never intended for any one of us to do everything. Paul makes this point so clear in 1 Corinthians 12 as he talks about the importance of every part of the body. Each of us has a task, but we must avoid letting pride keep us from sharing the work God has prepared for another.

10. **Pray:** Two final countries we don't often consider when praying for unreached people groups might be the United States and Canada. Both are viewed as Christian countries (although even that might be questioned), but immigration has brought the unreached people groups of the world to us. The Joshua Project lists 100 Unreached People groups totaling 18 million people in the US and 78 with a combined population of 3.7 million in Canada. Pray that the Church in these two countries will not ignore those within their borders.