

Exodus 18:1–12

Introduction

This morning, we come to the somewhat famous account of how Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, comes to visit Moses in the wilderness. This story is mostly famous for the advice that Jethro gives to an overworked Moses about appointing men who can share the load of judging the people. But that's only the second *half* of the story (18:13-27). Moses actually devotes an *entire*—and very *detailed*—chapter to the visit of Jethro, his father-in-law.

At first, this may seem kind of strange. What's the real point of all this? And whatever the point may be, is it really enough to justify all the detail of chapter eighteen? Of course, the answer to that second question, we can assume, is “yes,” the detail will be entirely and beautifully justified. This week, we'll look at the first half of chapter eighteen – verses 1-12:

I. Exodus 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.

Jethro was first introduced way back in chapter two when Moses fled from Pharaoh to the land of Midian. (cf. Exod. 2:15-22) We remember how he met the seven daughters of Reuel, the priest of Midian, at a well and watered their flocks after first dealing with the shepherds who would have driven them away. (I assume with many commentators that Reuel is another name for Jethro.) When Jethro/Reuel heard what Moses had done for his daughters, he invited him to his home, and there Moses was content to stay and even to become Jethro's son-in-law by marrying his daughter, Zipporah.

The last we heard of Jethro was in chapter four when Moses went to his father-in-law after the burning bush and asked for his blessing on a return visit to his brothers and relatives in Egypt. (cf. Exod. 4:18-20) Now, of course, a whole lot has happened since then! And even Jethro, the priest of Midian, has heard from far off of all that God has done in bringing Israel out of Egypt.

II. Exodus 18:2–4 — Now Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her home, along with her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom (for he said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land”), 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”).

We're not sure at what point Moses sent his wife and sons back to his father-in-law – or even necessarily for what reasons, but at some point they did return to Jethro, back in the land of Midian.

Now way back in chapter two, we were already told why Moses named his firstborn son, Gershom, but now we're given the *same* information *again* – “For he said, ‘I have been a sojourner in a foreign land’” The name of Moses' son was a constant reminder to him of the “foreignness” of Midian – that his life in Midian could only be a sojourning in a foreign land. The point isn't that the land of Egypt was “home,” but rather that his home was with his own people – and *not* with the foreign Midianites. (cf. Calvin; contra, Durham) So maybe, now, we

can make this simple observation: In chapter seventeen we meet the foreign *Amalekites*. And now, in chapter eighteen, we have the foreign *Midianites*.

We also learn, now, about the naming of Moses' second son. He named him Eliezer ("for he said, 'The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh'"). Just as Moses' first deliverance from Pharaoh was followed by a first meeting with Jethro, the Midianite, so now a second and greater deliverance from Egypt is about to be followed by another meeting—a reunion—with Jethro, the Midianite.

"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." So...

III. Exodus 18:5 — 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.

If we're paying close attention, it's hard not to notice another parallel with chapter seventeen.

➤ Exodus 17:8 — Amalek *came* [to] Israel *at Rephidim*.

And now: "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*."

In chapter seventeen, the *foreign* "Amalek" came. In chapter eighteen we have another foreigner coming – this time a foreign Midianite named Jethro. Will the Midianite come with better intentions than the Amalekite?

IV. Exodus 18:6–7 — 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," 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.

Look at what an intimate and detailed picture we're given of Moses' reunion with his father-in-law! And notice how the emphasis is on his father-in-law, Jethro, *rather* than on his wife and children. Clearly, we're being set up for something special. We can picture the scene very vividly. One day a messenger comes into the Israelite camp asking to see Moses. Once the messenger is granted an audience, Moses receives the happy news that his father-in-law and his family are coming behind – upon which Moses sets out immediately to meet his father-in-law on the way. When they do finally meet, we see everything that happens as though we were there ourselves. Moses bows down and greets his father-in-law with the traditional kiss. As they accompany one another back to the camp, they catch up on each other's general welfare and all the usual news, and then we see them go immediately into Moses' tent where they can talk more in depth about all that's happened since they last parted.

So what's the big deal? What is it that will be so special about this story?

V. Exodus 18:8 — 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.

It’s pretty obvious what Moses is doing, isn’t it? It’s possible we could say that this is the first case of “evangelizing” anywhere in the Bible – right here in the Old Testament, in the book of Exodus. From the overflow of his own heart, Moses relates to his father-in-law *not* the things that *he* has done, but “*all* that *Yahweh* 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 *Yahweh* had delivered them.” Moses is giving testimony to the goodness, and the glory, and the power and supremacy of Yahweh, the God of Israel.

And to whom is Moses witnessing and proclaiming all these things? – To a *Midianite* and a *foreigner*, and even more specifically to a Midianite *priest*! The picture is really quite *startling* and *amazing*, and yet now it’s about to get even more so. How will a foreign Midianite priest respond to the news about the God of Israel? We’ve already seen from Pharaoh that there are always excuses that can be made – there are always ways to “justify” unbelief and hardness of heart. And so what an awesome thing it is to go on and read in verse 9:

VI. Exodus 18:9 — 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.

Most translations say that Jethro “rejoiced.” Some translations say that Jethro was “delighted.” (NIV; NLT) One commentator points out that this word is “rare... The Septuagint translates it as if it derives from [a]... root [meaning] ‘to tremble/shudder’. The Jewish *Midrash*... renders the verb as ‘He felt cuts in his body.’ No matter how one views it, the word reflects a heightened response on the part of Jethro.” (Currid) So another commentator actually translates like this: “Jethro *was overjoyed*...” (cf. Durham)

Not only is Jethro overjoyed, but notice what he’s overjoyed *about* – “for all the good that the LORD had done *to Israel*, in that he had delivered *them* out of the hand of the Egyptians.” Jethro hasn’t personally experienced *any* of Israel’s deliverance, and yet he rejoices with Israel almost as though he had – almost as though he were *one of them*. And so we go on to see in verses 10-11 how he gives expression to his great joy and delight:

VII. Exodus 18:10–11 — Jethro said, “Blessed be YAHWEH, 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. Now I know that YAHWEH is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people.”

We have to remember that this isn’t a formal or canned confession. This isn’t just Jethro being polite, or politically correct. These are the words of a man who is overjoyed and filled with delight over what Yahweh has done for another people who are foreign to himself.

The phrase, “Blessed be YAHWEH,” appears twenty-nine times in the Bible. Ten times we find it on the lips of the Psalmist.¹ Outside of the Psalms, we find this phrase four times on the lips of

David as an expression of thanksgiving, and worship, and praise,² and twice on the lips of Solomon.³ Others who use this phrase are Noah,⁴ Abraham's trusted servant,⁵ the women in Israel,⁶ Ahimaaz (a loyal servant of David),⁷ Ezra (the priest and scribe),⁸ and Zechariah (the father of John the Baptist).⁹ All of these examples help us see that when people say, "Blessed be YAHWEH," it seems to be always a joyful expression of *faith* in the covenant God of Israel.¹⁰ But, of course, the startling thing here is that this is Jethro, a Midianite priest! This time, it's not the Israelites, but a foreigner who says, as the expression of his joy and delight, "Blessed be YAHWEH." Of the twenty-nine times that this phrase appears in the Bible, there are two other times that we also hear a Gentile speaking these words – once from a king, and once from a queen.

- 1 Kings 5:7 & 2 Chronicles 2:12 — As soon as Hiram [the Gentile king of Tyre] heard the words of Solomon, **he rejoiced greatly** and said, "***Blessed be YAHWEH*** this day, who has given to David a wise son... who has discretion and understanding, who will build a temple for **YAHWEH** and a royal palace for himself."
- 1 Kings 10:4–6, 8–9 (cf. 2 Chron. 9:8) — When the [Gentile] queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon... **there was no more breath in her**. And she said to the king, "The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom... Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! ***Blessed be YAHWEH*** your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because **YAHWEH** loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness."

Jethro, Hiram, and the queen of Sheba are all responding in joy and awe to what they have seen of the glory of Yahweh: Jethro to what he has seen of Yahweh's great power to rescue and deliver His people from Egypt; Hiram and the queen of Sheba to what they have seen of Yahweh's faithfulness and goodness in the royal city of Jerusalem and the royal son of David. Jethro, Hiram, and the queen of Sheba are all examples of *Gentiles* whose eyes have been opened to see the glory of Yahweh, the God of *Israel* and then to actually rejoice greatly in Him. But now we remember that Jethro isn't quite finished.

After saying, "Blessed be YAHWEH," he goes on to say, "Now I know that YAHWEH is greater than all gods, because in this affair they [the gods of Egypt] dealt arrogantly with the people." We can't know for sure if Jethro had come to the conclusion that all of the "god's" he had previously worshiped were really non-existent and that there was only one true God. At the very least, he now believes that the God of another people—the people of Israel—is *greater* than all the gods of Midian. But it's also possible that Jethro is implying no more than what God Himself said back in Exodus chapter twelve¹¹:

- Exodus 12:12 — I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am YAHWEH.

So what we have here is a Gentile Midianite confessing and proclaiming that Yahweh has done exactly as He said He would do. Yahweh has proven Himself to be greater than *all* "gods" (even the "gods" of Midian), because when the "gods" of Egypt dealt arrogantly with the people,

Yahweh executed His judgments upon them. By *faith*, Jethro *sees* in the exodus of Israel what it *truly means*.

What does Jethro say? — “Now I know that YAHWEH is greater than all gods.” What we see here is that this truly is Jethro’s *personal* confession of faith. He’s not just repeating what someone else said. And he’s not just saying something that he considers to be *likely*, or even just *very possible*. No – he says: “Now **I know**.” “Now **I know** that YAHWEH is greater than all gods.” Have each one of us made the same, personal confession of faith?

Already, we’ve been reminded of two other Gentiles – Hiram and the queen of Sheba. But now we can’t help but be reminded of *three more* Gentiles who also came to be able to personally confess their faith in **YAHWEH**, the God of Israel, with the words, “**I know**.”

- Joshua 2:9–11 — [Rahab, a Gentile Canaanite,] said to the [spies], “**I know** that **YAHWEH** has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. For we have heard how **YAHWEH** dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt... for **YAHWEH** your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.
- 1 Kings 17:8–9, 24 (cf. vv. 10-23) — The word of the LORD came to [Elijah], “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon... Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you” ... And the woman said to Elijah, “**Now I know** that you are a man of God, and that the word of **YAHWEH** in your mouth is truth.”
- 2 Kings 5:15, 17–18 — Then [Namaan, the Gentile Syrian,] returned to the man of God... And he said, “Behold, **I know** that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel... from now on your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but **YAHWEH**.”

Of course, what we’ve learned here in Exodus eighteen is that the Canaanite Rahab, the Sidonian widow, and the Syrian Namaan – were all preceded and *anticipated* by the Midianite Jethro.

Well, we’ve learned, now, what was in Jethro’s heart – he was overjoyed and delighted. We’ve heard the words that Jethro spoke – he praised and confessed the God of Israel. And now we come to see what Jethro did:

VIII. Exodus 18:12 — 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 food¹² with Moses’ father-in-law before God.

This truly looks to be the awesome grand finale of this whole surprising and wonderful story. First of all, Jethro puts his faith into action by worshipping God with a burnt offering and sacrifices. But there also seems to be something else. The burnt offering was the sacrifice that was completely consumed on the altar. But the “sacrifices” were the peace offerings that could be eaten and shared by the worshiper. So what it looks like we have here is Aaron, the high priest, and all the elders of Israel coming to eat of a sacrificial, covenant meal with Jethro in the presence of God. (“before God”; cf. NLT; NCV; Currid) And if this is really what’s happening, then what this seems to mean is actually “the formal [welcoming] of Jethro [a Midianite Gentile] *into* [the people of] Israel.” (Stuart)

Last week, we asked, “So whatever happened to the Amalekites?” This week, we might ask, “So whatever happened to the Midianites?” Well, the Midianites were apparently, to some extent, a loose collection of various nomadic desert tribes. If Jethro was a Midianite, he was even more specifically from the Midianite tribe, or family clan of the *Kenites*. We’ll see why that’s important to remember in just a moment. But first...

We know that Jethro did not stay long with Moses and the Israelites. We read at the end of chapter eighteen:

- Exodus 18:27 — Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went away to his own country.

But what we seem to learn later on is that when Jethro came to Moses, it wasn’t just Moses’ wife and children that he brought with him. Apparently, he also brought his son, along with other members of the Kenite family clan. When Jethro returned to his own land, some of these, apparently, stayed with Moses and the people of Israel. So one year from now, when the people of Israel are getting ready to set out from Mount Sinai, we read:

- Numbers 10:29–32 — Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel(Jethro?) 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.” But he said to him, “I will not go. I will depart to my own land and to my kindred.” 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. And if you do go with us, whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same will we do to you.”

And so it’s implied that Hobab, the Kenite, did stay with the Israelites along with any other members of his family clan, and that the Kenites did come to share with the Israelites in all the good that God had promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Some fifty years later, when the Israelites were still taking possession of the Promised Land after the death of Joshua, we read this:

- Judges 1:16 — The descendants of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up with the people of Judah from the city of palms into the wilderness of Judah, which lies in the Negeb near Arad, and they went and settled with the people [of Judah].

So in the book of Judges, it’s Jael, the wife of a Kenite man, who kills Sisera, the commander of the Canaanite armies, in her tent. (cf. Judges 4:11, 17-22) And it’s this same Jael who finds her heroism immortalized in the song of Judges chapter five. (cf. Judges 5:24-27) In 1 Samuel, the Kenites are listed as members of the tribe of Judah who received gifts from David because they helped him when he was hiding from Saul. (cf. 1 Sam. 30:26-31) In 1 Chronicles, we see two things: first of all, that the Kenites are thought of as full and complete members of the tribes of Israel.

- 1 Chronicles 2:55 — The clans also of the scribes who lived at Jabez: the Tirathites, the Shimeathites and the Sucathites. These are the Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab.

The second really important thing that we learn from this verse is that the family of Rechab was a part of the clan of the Kenites. Why is it important to know that the Rechabites were Kenites? Well, in Jeremiah chapter 35, God actually uses the Rechabites as an object lesson for the rest of Israel of what true obedience really looks like. And so we read at the end of the chapter these amazing words:

- Jeremiah 35:18–19 — But to the house of the Rechabites Jeremiah said, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Because you have obeyed the command of Jonadab your father and kept all his precepts and done all that he commanded you, therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab the son of Rechab shall never lack a man to stand before me.”

The last we hear of a Kenite is in the book of Nehemiah where we learn that a man from the family of Rechab was among those who had survived the exile and was now helping to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. (cf. Neh. 3:14)

Conclusion

That is the last we hear of a Kenite, but now we need to go back and pick up one passage that we skipped over. The Amalekites and the Midianites actually seem to have some ties and connections with each other in the Old Testament. (cf. Judges 6:3, 33; 7:12) So in the days of King Saul, there were Kenites who had apparently never joined with Israel still living in the cities of the Amalekites. When King Saul, therefore, went to destroy the Amalekites at God’s command, this is what we read:

1 Samuel 15:2–3, 6 (cf. Deut. 25:17-18) — Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘I have noted what Amalek did to Israel *in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt*. Now go and strike Amalek... Then Saul said to the Kenites (cf. Exodus 18), “Go, depart; go down from among the Amalekites (cf. Exodus 17), lest I destroy you with them. For you *showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt*.” So the Kenites (cf. Exodus 18) departed from among the Amalekites (cf. Exodus 17).

What a stark and vivid contrast we have between the Amalekites in chapter seventeen, and Jethro, the priest of Midian in chapter eighteen! And what a contrast we also have between the history of the Amalekites throughout the Old Testament, and the history of the Kenites!¹³ And yet both of these chapters, and both of these histories, ultimately tell the *same story* of God’s zeal to bring His salvation to all the peoples of the earth. In chapter seventeen, we saw the “negative” side of that zeal in the decree that the Amalekites should be utterly annihilated and destroyed. But here in chapter eighteen, we see the very first beginnings of God’s salvation blessings reaching out to *include* even the Gentiles. In the story of Jethro we see anticipated the stories of other Gentiles, such as King Hiram, the queen of Sheba (cf. Mat. 12:42), Rahab (cf. Mat. 1:5; Heb. 11:31; Js. 2:25), Namaan (cf. Lk. 4:27), and the widow from Zarephath (cf. Lk.

4:25-26).¹⁴ In the story of Jethro, we see anticipated the permanent line of a family in Israel that will always shine as an example to all the rest of true faith and obedience.

What an astonishing miracle of God's free mercy and grace! And who are we? *Gentiles*. At least, we are Gentiles in the flesh. (cf. Eph. 2:11) But now through Christ, we too are full and unqualified members of the commonwealth of *Israel*. (cf. Eph. 2:12) The story of Jethro *anticipates* a day when the Gentiles will come in not one by one (as in the Old Testament), but rather come streaming in by the hundreds, and thousands, and tens of thousands. And now, **here we are!** The story of Jethro anticipates, really, our *own* story. As Paul says in Acts 14, God has now opened "a door of faith to the Gentiles." (Acts 14:27) And now Peter can say:

➤ Acts 10:34–35 (cf. Mat. 8:5-13) — Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

If Abraham is our forefather, then so also, in a sense, is Jethro – the sign that one day the door of faith would be opened to *us(!)*, *too(!)*, by God's free and sovereign grace. Will you live all your life, wholly and only for this merciful, redeeming God?

¹ Psalm 28:6 — **Blessed be YAHWEH!** For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy.

Psalm 31:21 — **Blessed be YAHWEH**, for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me.

Psalm 41:13 — **Blessed be YAHWEH**, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting!

Psalm 68:19 — **Blessed be YAHWEH**, who daily bears us up.

Psalm 72:18 — **Blessed be YAHWEH**... who alone does wondrous things.

Psalm 89:52 — **Blessed be YAHWEH** forever! Amen and Amen.

Psalm 106:48 — **Blessed be YAHWEH**, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting!

Psalm 124:6 — **Blessed be YAHWEH**, who has not given us as prey to their teeth!

Psalm 135:21 — **Blessed be YAHWEH**... who dwells in Jerusalem!

Psalm 144:1 — **Blessed be YAHWEH**... who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle.

² 1 Samuel 25:32–33 — David said to Abigail, "**Blessed be YAHWEH**, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand!

1 Samuel 25:39 — David... said, "**Blessed be YAHWEH** who has avenged the insult I received at the hand of Nabal, and has kept back his servant from wrongdoing.

1 Chronicles 16:36 — [When the ark of the covenant was brought to Jerusalem, David sang...] **Blessed be YAHWEH**, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting!

1 Kings 1:48 — [David] said, "**Blessed be YAHWEH**, the God of Israel, who has granted someone to sit on my throne this day, my own eyes seeing it."

³ 1 Kings 8:15, 56 (cf. 2 Chron. 6:4) — And [Solomon] said, "**Blessed be YAHWEH**, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to David my father... **Blessed be YAHWEH** who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised.

⁴ Genesis 9:26 — [Noah] also said, "**Blessed be YAHWEH**, the God of Shem.

⁵ Genesis 24:27 — **Blessed be YAHWEH**, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master.

⁶ Ruth 4:14 — Then the women [of Israel] said to Naomi, "**Blessed be YAHWEH**, who has not left you this day without a redeemer..."

⁷ 2 Samuel 18:28 — Then Ahimaaz... bowed before the king [David] with his face to the earth and said, “**Blessed be YAHWEH** your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king.”

⁸ Ezra 7:27–28 — [Ezra said,] **Blessed be YAHWEH**, the God of our fathers, who put such a thing as this into the heart of the king, to beautify the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem.

⁹ Luke 1:67–68 — And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, “**Blessed be the Lord** God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people. [The Greek, *kurios*, would be the equivalent here of the Hebrew *yhwh*]

¹⁰ The lone exception to this “rule” is the insincere expression in Zechariah which is really nothing more than a taking of Yahweh’s name in vain. Zechariah 11:5 — Those who buy them slaughter them and go unpunished, and those who sell them say, “**Blessed be YAHWEH**, I have become rich,” and their own shepherds have no pity on them.

¹¹ In Hebrew *Elohim*, here translated ‘gods,’ can refer to any supernatural beings, including angels, as well as false gods, who do not actually exist except in the imagination of their worshippers. Thus the ‘set’ or semantic field of Hb. References for *Elohim* includes the one true God, all false gods, all supernatural beings (angels, seraphim, cherubim), all demons, and even Satan. Jethro’s words need not be understood to connote that he thought Yahweh was ‘greater than all other deities that actually exist’ but rather ‘greater than all other supernatural beings or any of the supposedly supernatural beings that people think exist.’” (Stuart) “Yahweh became for Jethro at that moment the supreme God, ‘greater than all other gods’—the only supernatural being that in modern English usage would be called ‘God.’”

¹² The Hebrew *lechem* can mean either bread in specific or food in general. The point here seems to be food in general (cf. NASB; NIV; HCSB; NET; NCV; NLT)

¹³ “The Amalekites had met Israel with hostility, as the prototype of the heathen who would strive against the people and kingdom of God. But Jethro, the Midianite priest, appeared immediately after in the camp of Israel... so that in the person of Jethro the first-fruits of the heathen, who would hereafter seek the living God, entered into religious fellowship with the people of God. As both the Amalekites and Midianites were descended from Abraham, and stood in blood-relationship to Israel, the different attitudes which they assumed towards the Israelites foreshadowed and typified the twofold attitude which the heathen world would assume towards the kingdom of God.” (Keil)

¹⁴ Another well-known Gentile convert would be Ruth, the Moabite (cf. Mat. 1:5). Cf. also the Ninevites mentioned by Jesus in Mat. 12:41.