

## *A note from Kathy*

*There is really nothing like a good listener. As a parent, I would give instructions to my children and then ask them to repeat them back to me. I wanted to be sure they had actually heard me. We often think we are listening, when really we are simply present. Listening involves much more; it requires concentration and our undivided attention if we are to say we have really heard someone. God is about to speak to his people; let's see how well they are listening. Ask God to help you focus on the chapters before you and truly hear from Him.*

## *Observation*

1. It is amazing how quickly news traveled even back then. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had heard everything that God had done in Egypt for his people Israel. It is not clear when Zipporah was sent back to her father's care, but she and their two sons were with him. What can be learned about these boys' birth by observing the meaning of their names?
2. Jethro came to see Moses in the desert and brought Zipporah, Moses wife, and Gershom and Eliezer, their two sons. I am sure this was a very happy reunion. After all his time in the desert, he had probably been a bit lonely. How had the people responded to him over and over?
3. Jethro was getting the opportunity to hear the details directly from Moses himself. There is nothing like first-hand information. What was Jethro's response?
4. Jethro witnessed first hand all of the pressures Moses faced each day. Boldly he came to Moses with his thoughts concerning this ministry to the people. Look at verses 17-23. As it is with many good leaders, they try to do too much by themselves. What problem did Jethro see? What solution did Jethro suggest?
5. How did Moses respond to Jethro's suggestions?
6. How long had the Israelites been travelling in the desert?

7. The Israelites had come to the mountain where God had originally spoken to Moses in the burning bush, Mt. Sinai (Exodus 3). God had supplied their physical needs with quail and manna every day and was now going supply for their spiritual needs. God had chosen them by no merit of their own, but by his sovereign will. He had reminded them of his purpose over and over, that Israel and others “may know that I am LORD.” With that in mind, we see that God began an intimate time of training. How did God say they had gotten to this point? Verse 4
8. I love word pictures like the one in verse 4, God carrying Israel like an eagle caring for her young. Now God was laying out some very basic instructions for his people. Notice the “if” and “then” of verse 5. Write this verse in your own words.
9. In your own words explain what you believe it means to be,  
God’s treasured possession,  
His kingdom of priests,  
a holy nation
10. After the beautiful words of love that God had just expressed to his people, what was their response to him in verse 8?
11. Even though God used Moses to marvelously deliver Israel, what proof was he about to give in verse 9 to prove that Moses was the man that God was using to lead this nation?
12. God is holy and must be approached as such. What were they instructed to do before they were to stand before Him? Notice the physical (outward) and spiritual (inward) preparations given in Exodus 19: 10-15.
13. Why do you believe the people had to be warned again not to come up the mountain? Moses had set certain limits around the mountain and had given them their instructions concerning touching the mountain. Verse 21 says God sent him back down to warn them again. Why would this be necessary? What do you know so far about these people and their character?
14. Define the words “boundaries” and “limits.”

## *Application*

1. Moses had been careful to give God the glory for all that he had done. Because of this, Jethro's eyes were opened; in Exodus 18:11, we see he believed, and in verse 12, he worshipped. When was the last time you shared the goodness and care of our Lord with someone, and they transferred their trust to Christ and worshipped the Lord with their whole heart and life?
2. Do you draw others closer to God by the things you share in conversation?
3. Moses shared the details of God's deliverance and of all that had happened along the way. How important is it for us to have a trusted friend like Jethro?
4. Moses' father-in-law made some suggestions after he had seen for himself how over-worked Moses was, with all the issues and disputes. How well do you heed advice? Are you able to accept new ideas? Can you recall a time when you sought someone's advice, and then heeding it proved very beneficial?
5. In Exodus 19 we saw God's instructions for the people to consecrate (purify, cleanse or set apart) themselves in order to hear from God. What preparations do you take to meet with the holy, sovereign God of the universe?
6. As parents we understand the necessity of perimeters and boundaries. They are in place for the purpose of protection. What boundaries and perimeters are in place in order to protect you? If you are a child of God, do they have anything to do with being able to come into God's presence? Read Hebrews 4:14-16. How does knowing this make you feel?