

**CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF GOD'S ECONOMY
PORTRAYED IN EXODUS (2)—PROVISION**

Message Nine

A Portrait of the Kingdom

Scripture Reading: Exo. 18:5-21; 40:33-35; Gal. 5:17-21, 24-25; Matt. 5:20; 13:43;
Rom. 14:17; Acts 2:37-38; Col. 1:18; Eph. 4:15-16

- I. At the beginning of the book of Exodus, the children of Israel, God's chosen people, are under the tyranny of the world; God saved them, delivered them, rescued them, and made them His dwelling place on earth—Exo. 1:7-14; 25:8-9; 39:43; 40:33-35:**
- A. In the first section we see that we, who were fallen, have been redeemed, saved, and delivered; furthermore, we see that we have passed through the Red Sea and have entered into the wilderness, where we enjoy God's provision and defeat the flesh; what a wonderful salvation this is—cf. Exo. 1–17.
 - B. The purpose of this book is to show God's full salvation for the building up of His dwelling place; in the first chapter we see God's chosen people in a fallen condition in Egypt, but in the last chapter we see the tabernacle as God's dwelling place—Exo. 39:43; 40:33-35.
 - C. After the defeat of Amalek, the kingdom is needed as the sphere, the environment, for the building up of God's dwelling place on earth.
- II. In Exodus 18 we have a type, a portrait, of the kingdom of God; this indicates that when Amalek is dealt with, the kingdom with the kingship immediately comes in—cf. Gal. 5:17-25; 1 Kings 1–8:**
- A. If we enjoy God's salvation to the extent of defeating Amalek, of dealing with God's enemy within us, we shall have the kingdom of God as the issue, the result, of God's salvation—Phil. 3:3-10:
 - 1. Instead of explaining the kingdom, the book of Exodus gives us a picture of the kingdom; in chapter eighteen there is no mention of the word kingdom, but there is a clear picture of the kingdom.
 - 2. The kingdom comes in after God's enemy, Amalek, which typifies the flesh, has been defeated; the New Testament reveals that the kingdom comes when God's chosen people have defeated His enemy—Exo. 17:13-16; Rev. 20:4, 6; Matt. 5:20; 13:43; Rom. 14:17.
 - B. When the kingdom comes as a result of the defeat of God's enemy, the Gentiles who are seeking God will come to worship Him; these Gentiles are represented by Jethro—Exo. 18:1, 5, 10-12; Isa. 2:2-3; Zech. 8:20-23.
 - 1. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, was a priest of Midian; the Midianites and the Amalekites were somewhat mixed together; after the Amalekites were defeated, certain of the Midianites came to God's people in a very godly way—cf. John 12:20-22.
 - 2. Jethro was a priest not of idols, but of the true God; he praised God, worshipped God, and offered sacrifices to God; therefore, Jethro represents the Gentiles who turn to God and become seekers of God in the kingdom—Exo. 18:10-12.

- C. When the kingdom comes, the church participates in the kingdom; in fact, the church will be the ruling authority in the kingdom; in Exodus eighteen the church is represented by Zipporah, the wife of Moses secured by him during his rejection by Israel—Exo. 2:13-22; Rom. 11:11-15; cf. Gen. 41:45:
1. We may apply this picture to our situation today; we know from our experience that when our flesh is defeated, the unbelievers will turn to us—Acts 2:37-41.
 2. If we first defeat and subdue our flesh and then go forth to contact people and preach the gospel to them, Jethro will come to us; this means that the unbelievers will turn this way—2:41, 47.
 3. When we preach the gospel by the living Spirit through the operating cross, killing the flesh, people will turn to us wherever we go.
- D. In Exodus 18 we also have a picture of the authority and order of the kingdom; Christ, signified by Moses, is the Head of authority, and under the headship of Christ is the order of authority—Exo. 18:13-27; Col. 1:18; Eph. 4:15:
1. Jethro's proposal was very positive; it depicts the order under divine authority in the kingdom of God; it helps us to see that in God's kingdom there is no disorder—Deut. 1:15; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5.
 2. Just as there was no need for everything to be referred to Moses, so there is no need in the church today for everything to be referred to the elders; instead, there should be captains in the church life who, under Christ's headship, work out problems and maintain order—Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Cor. 12:24-27; 14:3, 24-26, 31-32.

III. In Exodus 18 we see four aspects of this picture of the kingdom: the defeat of Amalek, the flesh, by God's people; the coming of the godly Gentiles to seek God; the prevailing of the Gentile church; and the maintaining of a proper order; when these four matters are put together, we have the kingdom of God as the issue of the enjoyment of God's salvation and provision.

Focus:

The burden in this last message is to show the young people that once the flesh is dealt with the kingdom comes in. When the kingdom comes in its reality, the unbelievers will turn to us and the church life will become the reality of the kingdom on the earth. Then there will be order and the young people will enter into their function to shepherd one another and perfect one another in the church life.