

Cindy Bassett

# The Bible Corner



## Judges for the Hebrews

Moses looked out from his tent over the vast sea of people camped in the wilderness. Today was the Sabbath — a day of rest and quiet, dedicated to the Lord. He went back and sat down, savoring the peace.

Several months had passed since the Israelites had left Egypt for freedom. It seemed an entire lifetime to Moses. And still, he knew there was much work to be done, and he must remain strong for the rest of the journey to the Promised Land.

"I'm old and worn out," Moses prayed to God. "Are you sure you have the right person for this job?"

Just then, Moses heard someone approach and looked up to see his brother, Aaron. "Good morning, Moses," Aaron greeted him. "You have a visitor."

It was Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, who stood just outside the tent. Moses rose to meet him. "Jethro, how very good to see you," said Moses, smiling warmly, his eyes lined sharply in weariness.

"How long has it been since you have tended my sheep?" Jethro chuckled.

Moses paused, his expression tinged with nostalgia.

"It seems like years, Jethro. Now I tend people. I think my job was easier with the animals."

"Ah, maybe so," Jethro said gently.

"But Hebrew lives are of much more concern to God."

"You are right, but sometimes I think God could be served better with someone else tending to His people," Moses replied sadly.

"Moses, how can you say that? You've taken the Hebrews out of Egypt, where they have been slaves for hundreds of years! You are famous throughout the land. Come, tell me all that has happened since you first went back to Egypt."

It was not easy to convince the stubborn king of Egypt to let the Hebrews go," Moses began. "In fact, Pharaoh was so certain of his great power that he dared to compete with our God. But his false gods were powerless to do anything about the plagues that God inflicted on Egypt. Even his court magicians and chief advisors took our side in the end."

"But, through it all, Pharaoh remained stubborn," Moses went on. "It started with the Nile River being changed into blood. Then the frogs, lice and flies invaded Egypt. Each time another plague struck, Pharaoh begged me to ask God to take it away. Even though he promised to release the Hebrews, as soon as the plague had been removed, Pharaoh grew even more stubborn."

"Looking back on it all now, I think God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Our own people had been living in a country surrounded by false gods for such a long time that they started to forget about the one true God. After each plague, their faith seemed to grow a little stronger — especially when they saw that none of the terrible plagues occurred in Goshen, where they lived," said Moses. "God had protected the Hebrews in a special way."

"Moses, you puzzle me," Jethro interrupted. "You speak of so many miracles from our God, and yet it seems as if you have lost heart."

"We have encountered so many obstacles in our journey to the Promised Land," Moses replied, "and each time the people continue to grumble and complain. They forget so easily everything that God has done for us."

"The people have not forgotten, Moses," said Jethro. "They have just allowed their daily cares to cloud their view of things. But God is ever faithful to His promises, and the Hebrews have an excellent leader to remind them. Now come, let us make a sacrifice of thanksgiving to our God. He has rescued the Hebrews from Egypt, and He will surely bring these people to a new land, just as He told you that day, on the mountain as you tended my sheep."

The next day, Jethro watched as Moses sat from morning until evening, hearing all of the cases of the people who came before him. They brought their disputes and other problems to Moses so that he could tell them how God's laws applied to their individual situations.

At the end of the day, Jethro said to Moses, "This is too much for one person to

bear alone. Now I understand why you were discouraged yesterday. You are worn out from trying to do everything alone. I have an idea: appoint judges to assist you from among the Hebrews. They should be men who will not accept bribes that will distort their sense of truth and justice. These judges can settle the small matters and leave the large, complicated decisions to you. And then, Moses, you will have the strength to lead the people."

Moses was humble enough to listen to Jethro's good advice. Moses chose able men to serve as judges. By the time Jethro went back to his home to Midian, he was feeling much better.

Just after Jethro departed, Moses praised and thanked God for sending yet another sign of His constant care and love for His people.

### For discussion:

1) Has there been a time in your life when you were so tired that you become discouraged? Moses prayed, and God sent Jethro.

2) What reason did Jethro give to Moses for the Hebrews not remembering all of the miracles that God had done for them in Egypt?

3) There is an old saying about "counting your blessings" when you feel tired. What things did Moses think about that gave him new strength and faith to continue? What blessings can you reflect on next time you are discouraged?

### For further reading:

1) The story of the appointment of the judges is found in Exodus, Chapter 18.

2) When Jethro reminded Moses about the promise God had made to him as he tended sheep, he was referring to the story of the burning bush in Exodus, Chapter 3.

### Chicago professor to lecture

Langdon Gilkey, the Shailer Mathews professor of theology at the University of Chicago Divinity School, has been scheduled to lecture at the University of Rochester on Sunday, January 18. Dr. Gilkey's topic will be "The Creationism Controversy: Religion and Science in an Advanced Scientific Culture." The lecture, set for 8 p.m. in the U

of R Interfaith Chapel, is part of the University's annual Rochester Conference. Call (716)275-4321 for information.

### St. John Knights to recite rosary

Six commanderies of the Rochester Regiment Knights of St. John will again participate in the recitation of the Family Rosary for Peace on the third Monday of

each month at the Family Rosary Center, 401 Orange St., Rochester.

Commanderies to join Monsignor Joseph Cirrincione in the recitation of the rosary will be St. Boniface Commandery No. 9; St. Eustace Commandery No. 39; Perpetual Help Commandery No. 40; St. Michael's Commandery No. 43; Holy Rosary Commandery No. 106; and Mount Carmel Commandery No. 308.

### Secular Franciscans to meet

A meeting of the St. Patrick's Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order is scheduled for Sunday, January 18, at Aquinas Institute, 1127 Dewey Ave., Rochester. Novice instruction will take place at 1:15 p.m., followed by a recitation of the rosary at 1:30 p.m. and a Mass at 2 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

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