



Parsha Yithro / Jethro
Shemot / Exodus 18:1 – 20:23
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Yithro is one of only four *parashot* that are named after an individual in all of Torah. As we've learned before, whenever we see something out of the ordinary like this, we need to dig in a little deeper, in order to see what Adonai is saying to His people. This week, we'll see a special connection between "**Yithro**" and the giving of the "**Ten Commandments**".

So, let's begin reading today in **Shemot / Exodus 18:1-12**; *And Yithro, the priest of Midyan, Moshe's father-in-law, heard of all that Elohim had done for Moshe and for Yisra'el His people, that YHVH had brought Yisra'el out of Mitsrayim. And Yithro, Moshe's father-in-law, took Tsipporah, the wife of Moshe – after he had sent her back, and her two sons, of whom the name of one was Gershom, for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land," and the name of the other was Eliezer, for he said, "The Elohim of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh." Yithro, Moshe's father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moshe in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of Elohim. And he had said to Moshe, "I, your father-in-law Yithro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her." And Moshe went out to meet his father-in-law, and bowed down, and kissed him. And they asked each other about their welfare, and they went into the tent. And Moshe told his father-in-law all that YHVH had done to Pharaoh and to the Mitsrites for Yisra'el's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them on the way, and how YHVH had delivered them. And Yithro rejoiced for all the good which YHVH had done for Yisra'el, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Mitsrites. And Yithro said, "Blessed be YHVH, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Mitsrites and out of the hand of Pharaoh, and who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Mitsrites. "Now I know that YHVH is greater than all the mighty ones, indeed in the matter in which they acted proudly, above them." Then Yithro, the father-in-law of Moshe, brought a burnt offering and other slaughterings unto Elohim. And Aharon came with all the elders of Yisra'el to eat bread with the father-in-law of Moshe before Elohim.*

How fitting it is, that this *parsha*, with the giving of the "**Ten Words**", bears the name of "**Yithro**", or *Jethro* according to the KJV. You see, he's a picture of us. It seems that one of the "**stages**" of our awakening and entering into this understanding of the "*two houses being re-united*" is to think that it's really important to establish ourselves as either a Yehudite (*Jew*) or an Ephraimite (being from one of the other, *lost* tribes). Now, most of you know that it is by "**belief**" in Mashiach Yahshua and acceptance of His "**yoke**" that we are "**grafted**" into the Olive Tree of Yisra'el, as Sha'ul put it in

Romans 11. Sha'ul used another term for this *grafting in*; and that was “**adoption**”, in **Romans 8 & 9, Galatians 4 and Ephesians 1.**

Torah teaches us the same lesson; that there is one Torah for all Israel and the “**stranger**” who sojourns with Israel, according to **Shemot 12:49, Wayyiqra / Leviticus 18:26 & 19:33-34 and Bemidbar / Numbers 15:15-16** and so on and so on, many times. It's interesting that Torah speaks of the “**stranger**” who sojourns with B'nei Yisra'el 70 times and how Yahweh loves him and how Yisra'el is to love him also. In fact, the first verses devoted to this we read last week, as the Children of Yisra'el were leaving Mitzrayim, heading into the wilderness, in **Shemot 12:43-49; And YHVH said to Moshe and Aharon, “This is the law of the Passover: No son of a stranger is to eat of it, but any servant a man has bought for silver, when you have circumcised him, then let him eat of it. A sojourner and a hired servant does not eat of it. It is eaten in one house, you are not to take any of the flesh outside the house, nor are you to break any bone of it. All the congregation of Yisra'el are to perform it. And when a stranger sojourns with you and shall perform the Passover to YHVH, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and perform it, and he shall be as a native of the land. But let no uncircumcised eat of it. There is one Torah for the native-born and for the stranger who sojourns among you.”**

Do you understand what it's saying here? Once a *stranger* “**sojourns**”, or *learns Torah and walks in the way (adopts the halachah)* with Yisra'el and is circumcised, he is no longer a *stranger*, but an “**adopted son**”, who can keep the Passover and Torah. In either case, whether Torah, or the letters of Sha'ul, what is required is “**belief**” in the “**Word**”, living and/or written, of Elohim (*Yahshua is both*) and we become the *adopted* “**Children of Elohim**” and “**Heirs of the Promise**”. But, we are as “*natural born*” sons and daughters, according to **Yehezqel 47:22; “And it shall be that you divide it by lot as an inheritance for yourselves, and for the strangers who sojourn in your midst and who bear children among you. And they shall be to you as native-born among the children of Yisra'el – with you they have an inheritance in the midst of the tribes of Yisra'el.** Ahmein?

That describes Yithro. Like many of us, Yithro was seed of Avraham who had been alienated. First, we're told in the opening verse of our *parsha*, in **Shemot 18:1**, that he was a “**priest of Midyan**”. So, he was from Midyan. When we first read of Yithro, back in **Shemot 3:1** and again here, we're told that he was a “**priest of Midyan**”. If we investigate his lineage, we find that he was a “**Qeynite**”, according to Scripture. Now, we read in last week's Haftorah reading, when the army of the Kena'anites came up against Yisra'el (*remember about the woman, Ya'el, who killed the general, Sisera*), in **Shoft'im / Judges 4:11; And Heber the Qeynite, of the children of Hobab, of the father-in-law of Moshe, had separated himself from the Qeynites and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Tsa'anayim, which is beside Qedesh.** And then, **verses 16-17; But Baraq pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Haggoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword, not one was left. Sisera, meanwhile, had fled on foot to the tent of Ya'el, the wife of Heber the Qeynite, for there was peace between Yabin sovereign of Hatsor and the house of Heber the Qeynite.**

It's interesting to note that most Hebrew Scripture scholars agree that the Qeynites and Midyanites were the same people, just called by two different names at differing historical periods. Now, the father of the Midyanites was Midyan, a son of Avraham by Keturah, his wife, after Sarah died. So, as a Midyanite, Yithro was seed of Avraham. It's interesting to note that Yithro was just four generations from Avraham. And, as Avraham would have taught his children the ways of Elohim; by

the time Yithro came along, he would have understood Who Yahweh is. Yah chose and ordained Yithro for his relationship with Moshe and the wise and righteous counsel he would give Moshe. Remember what we read of Yithro back in **Parsha Shemot**.

Now, even though Yithro was a “**stranger**” and the “**priest**” of what would have been, at that time, a pagan nation, he understood well the ways of Elohim. Remember, Yahweh calls him by two names in Scripture. In fact, Yithro epitomizes the conversion experience. When he is first introduced to us, in **Shemot 2:15-22**, we know him as “**Re’uw’el**”. In Hebrew, this means “**friend of Elohim**”. Now, the name he is most often called is “**Yithro**”, which means “**abundance**”. This also equates to “**remnant**” or “**excess**” or, that which is “**left over**”. He’s a true picture of the “**remnant**” that’s “**left over**”, out of the world. Remember, as a “**Priest of Midyan**”, he would have led pagan worship in his homeland. According to Scripture, Midyanites worshipped many mighty ones, including their most powerful mighty one, “**ba’al pe’or**” (*lord of light – a sun deity*). The rabbis teach that Yithro had understanding regarding many pagan gods. So, why was **he** given Yah’s righteous wisdom? Why were we given a heart to seek Him, seeing that we too were part of a pagan system? We too had understanding mixed of both worlds.

Yithro’s name, “**abundant**”, is much like “**Yoseph**” which means “**Yahweh has added**” or “**made abundant**”. As we’ve discussed many times, the letters of the Hebrew aleph bet are also the numbers. So the name Yithro (*Yud-tav-reish-vav* or 10+400+200+6) adds up to 616; which equals the numeric value of “**debar tee**” – “**I have spoken**” or “**I will speak**” (from **B’reshith/Gen. 24:33**) and “**va bachar tah**” – “**therefore you shall choose**” (from **Debarim/Deut. 30:19**). 616 is also the numeric value of “**ha Torah**” – “**the Instructions**”. What was the chief promise that Yahweh made to the “**Remnant**” when He said that He would come for us in the last days? It is the summation of **Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 31** is, “**I will speak, therefore you shall choose Torah**”.

Next, we read that when Yithro heard all that Yahweh had done for Moshe and Yisra’el, he came out into the wilderness to hear Moshe’s testimony first hand, from his own lips. And, Yithro believed, he rejoiced in all that Elohim had done, He blessed Yahweh and he said, “**Now I know that YHVH is greater than all the mighty ones, indeed in the matter in which they acted proudly, above them.**” After which, he brought a burnt offering and made slaughterings to Elohim.

This is the beauty of Yahweh’s plan. We are *all* “**converts**” before Him. The Hebrew word used for “**convert**” is “**ger**”. It literally means, “**stranger and sojourner**”. We hear from our brother Yehudah the term “**ger toshav**” for “**righteous gentile**”. “**Toshav**” comes from the same root as “**teshuva**” or “**to repent**” or “**turn back**” to Elohim. As we read through **B’reshith/Genesis**, we kept seeing the words “**stranger**” and “**sojourner**” with regard to Avraham, Yitzaq and Ya’aqob. In fact, they appear 14 times in **B’reshith** alone in reference to our forefathers and their seed. We’re all “**ger**” or “**sojourners**” in a land that isn’t ours; but Yahweh’s. Look at Moshe’s sons, Gereshom and Eliezer, for a moment. “**Gereshom**” is from the root word “**ger**” and means “**foreigner**”, “**stranger**” or “**one in exile**”. “**Eliezer**” literally means “**El is help**”. In naming his sons, Moshe acknowledges that he was also a “**sojourner**” or “**ger**” and that it was Yahweh who called him out and brought about all the events of his life and the deliverance of B’nei Yisra’el. We have all come to be “**ger toshav**”, or “**converts**” by His “**chesed**” (“**kindness**” or “**mercy**”) and “**chen**” (“**favor**” or “**grace**”). Why? Because, that way no one can claim that the Torah belongs to them by birthright or through ancestral merit. Regardless of what some may say, the Torah is not the property of an exclusive group, or club. In Elohim, there is no room for pride or arrogance. **Shemot/Exodus 12:49** says; “**There is one Torah for the native-born and for the stranger who sojourns among you.**”

The Torah belongs only to the one who **“keeps it”**. If we believe in Messiah Yahshua; and, are willing to accept and follow the Torah as Yahweh gave it, then we are fulfilling **Shemot 24:7**; ***And he (Moshe) took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that YHVH has spoken we shall do, and obey.”*** The Hebrew word here, of course, is **“shema”** or **“hear and do and obey”**. Then, as His sheep, know His voice and hear Him when He says, as in **Shemot 20:1-2**; ***And Elohim spoke all these Words, saying, “I am YHVH your Elohim, who brought you out of the land of Mitsrayim, out of the house of slavery.”*** We, like Yithro and B’nei Yisra’el were in bondage to the **“mighty ones”** of this world, this Egyptian system devoted to sun-god worship. We served those **“elohim”** (little **“e”**), just as Yithro did. But, Yahweh seeks those with the courage to leave this servitude and to **“go out into the wilderness”** in search of Him and to hear Him speak. As the prophet said in **Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 29:13-14**; ***‘And you shall seek Me, and shall find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. And I shall be found by you,’ declares YHVH, ‘and I shall turn back your captivity, and shall gather you from all the gentiles and from all the places where I have driven you, declares YHVH. And I shall bring you back to the place from which I have exiled you.’***

In addition to our redemption and ultimate salvation, Yahweh says that the purpose for His dealings with us in this manner is, as He told Pharaoh in **Shemot 9:16**; ***“And for this reason I have raised you up, in order to show you My power, and in order to declare My Name in all the earth.*** And, 23 times in the TaNaK, Yahweh uses the phrase **“for My Name”** when describing His works and why He’s doing them. This is exactly what happened with Yithro. He was raised with the knowledge of Elohim; but then, received the witness of those present at Yahweh’s deliverance of B’nei Yisra’el. And then, he declared and esteemed the Name of Yahweh above all other names and made **“offerings”** (**“qorban”** or **“drawings near”**) to the Elohim of Avraham, Yitzaq and Ya’aqob.

Now, Yahweh had prepared a work for Yithro to give wisdom to Moshe regarding the leading of Elohim’s people, in **Shemot/Exodus 18:13-27**; ***And it came to be, on the next day, that Moshe sat to rightly rule the people. And the people stood before Moshe from morning until evening. And when the father-in-law of Moshe saw all that he did for the people, he said, “What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit by yourself, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?” And Moshe said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to seek Elohim. When they have a matter, they come to me, and I rightly rule between one and another, and make known the laws of Elohim and His Torot.” And the father-in-law of Moshe said to him, “What you are doing is not good. Both you and these people with you shall certainly wear yourselves out. For the matter is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it by yourself. Now listen to my voice. Let me counsel you and Elohim be with you: Stand before Elohim for the people, and you shall bring the matters to Elohim. And you shall enlighten them concerning the laws and the Torot, and show them the way in which they should walk and the work which they do. But you yourself, seek out from all the people able men, who fear Elohim, men of truth, hating unfair gain. And place these over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they shall rightly rule the people at all times. And it shall be that they bring every great matter to you, but they themselves rightly rule every small matter. So, make it lighter for yourself, for they shall bear with you. If you do this word, and Elohim shall command you, then you shall be able to stand and all this people also go to their place in peace.” And Moshe listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he said. And***

Moshe chose able men out of all Yisra'el, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they rightly ruled the people at all times – the hard matters they brought to Moshe, but they rightly ruled every small matter themselves. And Moshe sent off his father-in-law, and he went away to his own land.

This was the first formal government established for the Children of Yisra'el. It was practiced until the Romans drove Yehudah out of the Land; although, they have been governing their worship by this principle right along. And, they have already begun to re-establish this governing body in Israel today. Whether you compare it to Orthodox Judaism or the first Netzrim assemblies (those who follow **the Branch**), and I hope those of today, the pattern holds true. It starts with the rulers of **“tens”**. What's a **“ten”**? It's a **“minyón”** which represents the congregation. So here we see the *rabbi*, **“Shamash”** or *under-shepherd* (*Yahshua being the Good Shepherd*). Next, there are rulers of **“fifties”** which are in Hebrew, **“shoter'im”** or **“overseers”**; or as the church fathers would say, **“Bishops”**. Then there are the rulers of **“hundreds”** or **“Shiliach'im”** which are **“Emissaries”** or, as we often say, **“Apostles”**. And finally, there are rulers of **“thousands”** which represent the larger **“Beit Din”** or **“House of Judgment”**, called in Judaism the **“Sanhedrin”**. The Hebrew word **“Sanhedrin”** means **“Court”**, as it equates with the **“Supreme Court”**. We saw this in Yahshua's time within the Pharisaical system and the Netzrim community. Yehudah ultimately answered to the Sanhedrin and the Netzrim to the Beit Din headed by Ya'aqob (*James*), in his day. The Council of Jerusalem spoken of in **Acts 15** is this very body; one that Shimon Kepha, Sha'ul and Barnabah presented themselves to for right-rulings.

Then, we move on to **Shemot 19:1-8**; *In the third month after the children of Yisra'el had come out of the land of Mitsrayim, on this day they came to the Wilderness of Sinai. For they set out from Rephidim, and had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Yisra'el camped there before the mountain. And Moshe went up to Elohim, and YHVH called to him from the mountain, saying, “This is what you are to say to the house of Ya'aqob, and declare to the children of Yisra'el: ‘You have seen what I did to the Mitsrites, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. And now, if you diligently obey My voice, and shall guard My covenant, then you shall be My treasured possession above all the peoples – for all the earth is Mine – and you shall be to Me a reign of priests and a set-apart nation.’ Those are the words which you are to speak to the children of Yisra'el.” And Moshe came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which YHVH commanded him. And all the people answered together and said, “All that YHVH has spoken we shall do.” So Moshe brought back the words of the people to YHVH.*

In the third month after leaving Mitzrayim, *to the day*, they came into, or arrived at, the wilderness of Sinai. They left **“Rephidim”** (*Reish-fey-yud-dalet-yud-mem*), which means **“rest”** or **“to support”** or **“prop up”**. After the crossing of the Reed Sea and the death of the Egyptian army, Yahweh brought them to a **“place of rest”** and gave them water. The numeric value of the letters in **“Rephidim”** is 344 which equals **“la'shoochah”** or **“to meditate”**. Here they had time to meditate on what Yahweh had provided, from deliverance out of bondage, to supporting or sustaining them with manna and water. Then, they enter the **“Wilderness of Sinai”**. Remember, **“wilderness”** is that word **“midbar”** which is also **“mouth”**, **“speech”** or **“words”**. And **“Sinai”** literally means **“thorny”** or **“rough”**. Before they would break camp and move on, they would indeed hear **“thorny words”** from the mouth of their Creator and Deliverer.

Verse 2 says that they encamped before, or in the face of, the mountain. The Hebrew word here “*va’yichan*” or “*encamped*”, is singular and grammatically implies that they were as one camp, of one heart, as in one person. That’s something to think about. Can you imagine Yisra’el doing that today, encamping anywhere as one camp or person? With all the bickering and in-fighting and arguing within just this movement, let alone with Christians and our brother Yehudah, it’s hard to imagine all Yisra’el uniting together before Yahweh. But, that’s the purpose of the “*wilderness*”; to unite the obedient and separate out the rebellious.

Here also, Yahweh has Moshe tell B’nei Yisra’el that if they/we will diligently obey His voice and guard His covenant, we will be His treasured possession and He will make us a set-apart nation and a kingdom of priests (Yithros). Where have we heard that before? Shimon Kepha (*Peter*) spoke these words in **Kepha Aleph (1 Peter) 2:9-10**; *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a set-apart nation, a people for a possession, that you should proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light, who once were not a people, but now the people of Elohim; who had not obtained compassion, but now obtained compassion.*

Now, when Moshe brought this before the people, they all said, “*All that Yahweh has spoken, we shall do.*” With this, Yahweh was about to take Yisra’el as His Bride. Let’s pick it up in **Shemot 19:9-15** and see the preparation begin; *And YHVH said to Moshe, “See, I am coming to you in the thick cloud, so that the people hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever.” And Moshe reported the words of the people to YHVH. And YHVH said to Moshe, “Go to the people and set them apart today and tomorrow. And they shall wash their garments, and shall be prepared by the third day. For on the third day YHVH shall come down upon Mount Sinai before the eyes of all the people. And you shall make a border for the people all around, saying, ‘Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up to the mountain or touch the border of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall certainly be put to death. Not a hand is to touch it, but he shall certainly be stoned or shot with an arrow, whether man or beast, he shall not live.’ When the trumpet sounds long, let them come near the mountain.” And Moshe came down from the mountain to the people and set the people apart, and they washed their garments. And he said to the people, “Be prepared by the third day. Do not come near a wife.”*

Yahweh was about to give the people a “*great sign*” of Moshe’s authority. By coming down in the thick cloud, as in the column of cloud we read about last week, and speaking directly with Moshe, face to face, the people would know and believe Moshe from then on. He would not have to perform any more great signs. In fact, the only miracles that Moshe and Aharon would perform in the wilderness for the next forty years would be only to fulfill the direct needs of the Children of Yisra’el.

So Yahweh had Moshe set-apart the people. We discussed before how most English translations use the word “*sanctify*” here. If you look the word up, you’ll see that most dictionaries equate “*sanctify*” with “*purify*”, “*make holy*” or “*make sinless*”. While this isn’t entirely wrong, the Hebrew word here is “*qadash*” which means “*to set-apart*” or “*make separate*”. For two days the people were to set themselves apart and wash their clothes. Further, they were not to have marital relations during this “*setting apart*” of themselves. They were to make themselves “*ritually clean*” for their meeting with Yahweh on the “*third day*”. This is part of what we, as returning Yisra’el, will have to do again in our wilderness experience. The prophet writes in **Hoshea/Hosea 6:1-3** about our awakening to who we are in these last days; *‘Come, and let us turn back to YHVH. For He has*

torn but He does heal us, He has stricken but He binds us up. After two days He shall revive us, on the third day He shall raise us up, so that we live before Him. So let us know, let us pursue to know YHVH. His going forth is as certain as the morning. And He comes to us like the rain, like the latter rain watering the earth.' After two days (2,000 years) He is reviving us and in the third day, which is about over, He will raise us up, so that we live (as a nation again) before Him.

Next, in **Shemot 19:16-25** we read; *And it came to be, on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain. And the sound of the ram's horn was very loud, and all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moshe brought the people out of the camp to meet with Elohim, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. And Mount Sinai was in smoke, all of it, because YHVH descended upon it in fire. And its smoke went up like the smoke of a furnace, and all the mountain trembled exceedingly. And when the blast of the ram's horn sounded long and became louder and louder, Moshe spoke, and Elohim answered him by voice. And YHVH came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And YHVH called Moshe to the top of the mountain, and Moshe went up. And YHVH said to Moshe, "Go down, and warn the people, lest they break through unto YHVH to see, and many of them fall. And let the priests who come near YHVH set themselves apart too, lest YHVH break out against them." And Moshe said to YHVH, "The people are not able to come up to Mount Sinai, for You warned us, saying, 'Make a border around the mountain and set it apart.' " And YHVH said to him, "Come, go down and then come up, you and Aharon with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to YHVH, lest He break out against them." And Moshe went down to the people and spoke to them.*

It is here that Yahweh gives the "**Ten Words**" or "**Ten Commandments**", the "**Ketubah**" to Yisra'el in **Shemot 20:1-17**. This is considered the backbone of Torah, the explanation of the two greatest commands, Love YHVH and Love your neighbor as yourself. Before we read this entire section, I want to point out something from the beginning of **verse 2**; *"I am YHVH your Elohim, who brought you out of the land of Mitsrayim, out of the house of slavery."* As I read an Op-Ed piece from Rabbi Simon Jacobson, this week, on **Parsha Yithro**, I was captivated by what he said. He points out that the most famous statement ever uttered in all of human history, *The Ten Commandments*, begins with an unusual four-letter word: "**Anochi**". **Verse 2** begins in the Hebrew with; *"Anochi YHVH Elohecha..."* or literally, *"I YHVH your Elohim brought you out of the land of Mitsrayim, out of the house of slavery"*. There is no "**who**" in the Hebrew. The word "**Anochi**" means "**I**". But, "**ani**" is the common Hebrew pronoun for "**I**." So, **why** did YHVH use "**Anochi**"? Well the letters, *Aleph-nun-kaf-yud*, are an acronym for "**Ana Nafshi Ketovit Yehovit**". This literally means, "**My Soul Wrote Gave**" or, "**My Soul I wrote and Gave to You**". In what we're about to read, the Ten Commandments, is the very soul (**Nafshi** – *the personal form of Nefesh*) of our Creator King. In fact, by inscribing His very "**Soul**" into His Words, we can see how these Words of His renew our minds and transform us. Baruch HaShem YHVH.

And, as a brief side note here, the "**Ten Commandments**" is not an accurate translation of the original Hebrew "**Aseres ha'Dibrot**" which actually means "**Ten Words**", or "**Ten Statements**". "**Words**" and "**Statements**" are somehow more comforting terms than "**Commandments**" and fit perfectly with the meaning of the word "**Torah**" which is "**Instructions**" and not "**Law**".

Now, we read in **Shemot 20:1-17**; *And Elohim spoke all these Words, saying, “I am YHVH your Elohim, who brought you out of the land of Mitsrayim, out of the house of slavery. You have no other mighty ones against My face. You do not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of that which is in the heavens above, or which is in the earth beneath, or which is in the waters under the earth, you do not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, YHVH your Elohim am a jealous El, visiting the crookedness of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing kindness to thousands, to those who love Me and guard My commands. You do not bring the Name of YHVH your Elohim to naught, for YHVH does not leave the one unpunished who brings His Name to naught. Remember the Sabbath day, to set it apart. Six days you labor, and shall do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of YHVH your Elohim. You do not do any work – you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days YHVH made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore YHVH blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart. Respect your father and your mother, so that your days are prolonged upon the soil which YHVH your Elohim is giving you. You do not murder. You do not commit adultery. You do not steal. You do not bear false witness against your neighbor. You do not covet your neighbor’s house, you do not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, or whatever belongs to your neighbor.”*

OK, I know I do this a couple of times a year, at least, when we read these here, as well when they’re re-written on the tablets of stone. I’m not going into any depth here. But, we do need to be mindful of what Elohim’s statements mean. So, let me give a brief comment on each:

1. *“I am YHVH your Elohim, who brought you out of the land of Mitsrayim, out of the house of slavery.”* ~ Know that there is an Elohim. Don’t just believe in Him; seek to know intellectually as well as emotionally, through the design of His creation and genius of Torah.
2. *“You have no other mighty ones against My face You do not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of that which is in the heavens above, or which is in the earth beneath, or which is in the waters under the earth, you do not bow down to them nor serve them.”* ~ We are not to commit idolatry. This means making and worshipping carved or molten images. We are not to practice idolatry and say it is unto Him. I believe that this is why Yahshua, while He was here in the flesh, directed all prayer, and worship, even His own, to Elohim the Father. Originally, man was made in the image of Elohim. But, after sin came in, he fell. Yahweh **“created”**, **“fashioned”**, **“made”** a body, the image of a man (Yahshua), in order to redeem us back to the Covenant. Now, while **“everything”** that is **“in”** Yahshua is Yahweh, He did not want us to **“worship”** that image; because it is the **“image”** of a man. The Hebrew words in Torah here are **“phasal”** (fey-samech-lamed) for **“graven image”**, which means **“carved”**, **“molded”**, **“fashioned”** or **“made”**. And, **“te’moonah”** (tav-mem-yud-nun-hey) for **“likeness”** which is **“appearance”** or **“image”**. I’m not saying don’t esteem Yahshua, At His resurrection, even Yahweh esteemed Him. Yahweh is Yahshua. Yahweh is **“Salvation”**. They can’t be separated. They are not a **“trinity”** or even a **“twinity”**. They are echad, **“One”**.
3. *“You do not bring the Name of YHVH your Elohim to naught,…”* ~ Do not make, or cause, His name to mean, or become, **“nothing”**. We are not to use substitute names or

titles in place of His Set-Apart Name “**YHVH**”, Yahweh, in our prayers and intimate time. Likewise, we are not to diminish His Name by using it commonly, as that too is part of making His name nothing. Terms like “**Adon**” or “**Adona**” (*Master / my Master*) are fine to use in everyday conversation. Yehudah also uses “**HaShem**” in this same context. In prayer and study, they speak and read YHVH by name. They revere His Name to such an extent that they don’t speak it openly. That is reverence and not a character flaw, as some would have you believe. He specifically says that He will not leave those who bring His Name to naught unpunished. We should be careful in all aspects here.

4. **“Remember the Sabbath day, to set it apart.”** ~ Yahweh is really clear here that the Sabbath is the seventh day, because He blessed it and set it apart. Man does not have the authority or permission to change it.
5. **“Respect your father and your mother, so that your days are prolonged upon the soil which YHVH your Elohim is giving you.”** ~ This is larger than just you immediate parents. It also includes respecting your forefathers, which is the connection to your inheritance in the Land.
6. **“You do not murder.”** ~ This is one that Yahshua defined as including hatred.
7. **“You do not commit adultery.”** ~ The Hebrew word for “**adultery**” is “**tena’af**”. It is made up of two words “**ten**” and “**af**” which translates as “**giving anger**”. This sin destroys the relationship between husband and wife and it is the opposite of loving your neighbor as yourself. It also means “**idolatry**” or “**idolatrous worship**” as referenced in **Yirmeyahu 3:8**; **“And I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Yisra’el had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Yehudah did not fear, but went and committed whoring too.**
8. **“You do not steal.”** ~ This refers to more than money or property. The rabbis teach, just as Gesenius’ Lexicon and Brown, Driver, Briggs add that this also refers to deceiving someone, kidnapping or taking that which pertains to someone’s livelihood.
9. **“You do not bear false witness against your neighbor.”** ~ This sin perverts a verdict and destroys justice.
10. **“You do not covet your neighbor’s house, you do not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, or whatever belongs to your neighbor.”** ~ The Hebrew word here is “**chamad**” which means to “**desire**” or “**delight in**”. In reading the various lexicons and Hebrew dictionaries, I found that the connotation is that to “**delight in**” means also to “**fantasize about**” having that which is your neighbor’s; thereby, causing you to dislike or, according to Scripture, “**hate**” or “**loathe**” that which is yours. It creates or sets up idolatry/adultery in your heart for whatever it is you covet that is someone else’s. This brings Yahshua’s words about lusting and adultery into a broader application.

Now, let’s finish with **Shemot 20:18-26**; **And all the people saw the thunders, the lightning flashes, the sound of the ram’s horn, and the mountain smoking. And the people saw it, and they trembled and stood at a distance, and said to Moshe, “You speak with us and we hear,**

but let not Elohim speak with us, lest we die.” And Moshe said to the people, “Do not fear, for Elohim has come to prove you, and in order that His fear be before you, so that you do not sin.” So the people stood at a distance, but Moshe drew near the thick darkness where Elohim was. And YHVH said to Moshe, “Say this to the children of Yisra’el: ‘You yourselves have seen that I have spoken to you from the heavens. You do not make besides Me mighty ones of silver, and you do not make mighty ones of gold for yourselves. Make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall slaughter on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your cattle. In every place where I cause My Name to be remembered I shall come to you and bless you. And if you make Me an altar of stone, do not build it of cut stone, for if you use your chisel on it, you have profaned it. Nor do you go up by steps to My altar, lest your nakedness be exposed on it.’

Yahweh really did set Moshe apart in the peoples’ eyes. What we just read in **verse 18** is no misprint or mistranslation. I think that’s why it is repeated. The people saw, not only the lightning flashes; but, they also saw the thunder and the shofar blasts. That’s right, they saw the sounds. The Hebrew word used is “**ra’ah**” which is literally to “**see**”.

While they fear for their lives at Yahweh’s speaking, they know that Moshe is their “*go between*” or “*mediator*”. Well, if Moshe was the “**mediator**” between Yahweh and the Children of Yisra’el in the wilderness of Sinai, we can more easily understand what Sha’ul is talking about in **Ibrim / Hebrews 8:6-12**, as he speaks of Mashiach Yahshua; *But now He has obtained a more excellent service, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant (the Covenant at Mo’ab), which was constituted on better promises (it provides for our return). For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He says, “See, the days are coming,” says YHVH, “when I shall conclude with the house of Yisra’el and with the house of Yehudah a renewed covenant, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Mitsrayim, because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them,” says YHVH. Because this is the covenant that I shall make with the house of Yisra’el after those days, says YHVH, giving My laws in their mind, and I shall write them on their hearts, and I shall be their Elohim, and they shall be My people. And they shall by no means teach each one his neighbor, and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know YHVH,’ because they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. Because I shall forgive their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawlessnesses I shall no longer remember.”*

Then, Moshe tells them that Yahweh had come to “**prove**” them. The Hebrew word here is “**na’sah**”, meaning also “**to test**” or the English version of that word, which is “**assay**”, as in to “**assay**” precious metals within ore to see if the ore is worth processing and refining. Elohim “**assayed**” or “**proved**” them, in order for them to see that He “**chose**” them, “**tested**” them and would “**refine**” them in order to perfect His chosen Bride, Yisra’el.

And YHVH said to Moshe, “Say this to the children of Yisra’el: ‘You yourselves have seen that I have spoken to you from the heavens.’ Again, the word here for spoken is “**dabar**” or “**to have words with**”, as well as “**to lead**” or “**guide**”. *“You do not make besides Me mighty ones of silver, and you do not make mighty ones of gold for yourselves.”* While this is a reminder; it is also in addition to the Second Commandment. Other translations read, “**You shall not make with me gods of silver,**” etc. The Hebrew word used here as “**besides**” or “**with**” is “**eetee**” (*aleph-tav-yud*) and means “**neighboring**” or “**next to**” or “**with**”. Also, we do not have the word “**elohim**”, but

“**eloah**” which is singular. So, what’s he saying? Try it this way; “**You do not make an “eloah” (mighty one) out of silver or gold that which is next to Me**”. In other words, don’t make idols out of Yahshua (Yahweh in the image of man) or the “**malachim**” (**angels**). I’m talking statues, pictures or any image, “**phasal**” or “**te’moonah**”. Be careful what you worship. Yes, Yahshua is Elohim; but, His image is our image and not to be worshipped. Let us pay attention to what Moshe would later remind the Children of Yisra’el, in **Debarim / Deuteronomy 4:15-19**; **Therefore, diligently guard yourselves, for you saw no form when YHVH spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you should do corruptly and shall make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure – the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the heavens, the likeness of any creature that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth; and lest you lift up your eyes to the heavens, and shall see the sun, and the moon, and the stars – all the host of the heavens – and you be drawn away into bowing down to them and serving them, which YHVH your Elohim has allotted to all the peoples under all the heavens.**

This chapter ends with **verses 25-26**; **Make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall slaughter on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your cattle. In every place where I cause My Name to be remembered I shall come to you and bless you. And if you make Me an altar of stone, do not build it of cut stone, for if you use your chisel on it, you have profaned it. Nor do you go up by steps to My altar, lest your nakedness be exposed on it.** Yahweh prefers an altar of earth, Adam/man/ we are made from earth. We become the altar for that which we worship, because of the sacrifices we make; our time, energies, and the “**bulls of our lips**”. If that altar is stone, then we are not to “**chisel**” it (*put our marks on it*) or fashion it with our works. On His altar we obey not only Torah, but what **Yeshayahu/Isaiah** said in **Chapter 51:1**; “**Look to the rock you were hewn from, and to the hole of the pit you were dug from.**” It’s Yahweh’s altar, not our work. We place our “**works**” on His altar. We give them to Him. We do not ascend His altar by steps. The Hebrew here is “**ma’aleh**” (*mem-ayin-lamed-hey*) which means “**steps**” or “**stairs**”, and also “**stage**”. In other words, we’re not to ascend His altar as “*going up on a stage*”. It’s not for show, lest our nakedness (**ervah**) or “**shame**” be uncovered.

Yahshua said to the Samaritan woman (*who represents the northern kingdom*) in **Yohanan/John 4:22-24**; “**You worship what you do not know. We worship what we know, because the deliverance is of the Yehudim. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father also does seek such to worship Him. Elohim is Spirit, and those who worship Him need to worship in spirit and truth.**” Let everything that we do in worship and service to Him be as He desires.

Baruch HaShem Yahweh