

Wise Advice from Jethro (Exodus 18)

Expository Lessons from the Book of Exodus

I. Review from Previous Lessons

- a. After departing Egypt by crossing the Red Sea the Israelites, led by Moses, are in the Wilderness, which is a desert.
- b. The people face challenges very soon after departing Egypt, and begin complaining about lack of food and water.
- c. The Lord provided food as well as water for the people.
 - i. The Lord provided quail and then the daily manna for food.
 - ii. First the Lord provided drinking water by having Moses cast a piece of wood into the bitter waters of Marah; then later Moses struck the rock with his staff and water poured out.
- d. The Israelites were attacked by the Amalekites. Israel, fighting under Joshua, prevailed by having Moses hold up his staff on the hill all day, with Aaron and Hur on either side holding up his arms.
 - i. Early Christians saw in this a foreshadowing of the crucifixion, with Jesus' arms on the cross all day, and a man on either side.
 - ii. In the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint, LXX) the name of Moses' assistant (Joshua in Hebrew) is *Jesus*. (This is the very same name given to Jesus the son of Mary, the Son of God.) He is the one who leads the Israelites in battle against the Amalekites.

II. Jethro Takes Zipporah and Her Two Sons to See Moses

- a. Read **Exodus 18:1-12**.
- b. Storyline:
 - i. Jethro (also called Reuel, in **Exodus 2:18**) is a priest of Midian. He is also the father of Moses' wife, Zipporah.
 - ii. Moses and Zipporah had two sons. The older was Gershom, and the younger one was Eliezar.
 - iii. Apparently Moses had sent his wife and two sons back to visit his father-in-law Jethro.

- iv. Jethro brings his daughter and two grandsons back to meet Moses where the Israelites are camped, at Mt. Sinai (also called Horeb, “the mountain of God”).
 - v. Jethro had heard the news that the Lord had delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt, but had not heard the details of what happened. Moses tells his father-in-law all that had happened.
 - vi. Jethro was amazed at the account, of all that the Lord had done. He blesses the Lord and concludes that the Lord is greater than all the ‘gods’ of Egypt.
 - vii. Jethro offers a whole burnt offering sacrifice to the Lord, and they are joined by Aaron and the elders of Israel to share a meal together.
- c. Moses and Zipporah had a relatively small family.
- i. Moses left had Egypt at age 40, and then returned at age 80 with a Midianite wife and two children.
 - ii. The Israelites entered Egypt originally (Jacob and his 12 sons and their families) as a group of 75 people (**Exodus 1:5** in the LXX, and as recounted in Stephen’s speech in **Acts 7:14**).
 1. During their time in Egypt they multiplied to the degree that the Egyptians felt threatened by their numbers (**Exodus 1:8**).
 2. When the Israelites departed a few hundred years later, they had about 600,000 men over the age of 20 (**Exodus 12:37**; and **Exodus 38:25-26**, designated **Exodus 39:3** in the LXX; also see **Numbers 1:1-46**).
 - a. Keep in mind, that was *just the adult males* in the community.
 - b. If you include the women and children, the entire nation could have numbered 2 million or more.
 3. Over the space of a few hundred years it is possible to have that kind of population increase, but only if the Israelites generally had rather large families, with their descendants doing likewise for multiple generations.
 4. Even in recent history, we see a parallel here in Boston, where Irish immigrants in the 1800’s came here bringing a different culture, religion and customs. They also tended to have larger families than the native New Englanders, which made them seem even more of a threat to the locals.

- iii. In his *Proof of the Gospel, Book 1*, Eusebius (bishop of Caesarea), writing c. 320 AD, explained to unbelievers that Christians follow Abraham, Moses and the other Jewish prophets as inspired; *yet we are not Jews*. He then noted two common objections raised by those familiar with the Jews:
1. If you Christians are spiritually descended from the Jews, why don't you still *sacrifice animals*, like they did? AND...
 2. If you Christians are spiritually descended from the Jews, *why don't you have large families with many children*, like the Jews did?
- iv. Eusebius provided several answers to the second question, which gives us some insight into the view of (at least) *some* early Christians regarding family life.
1. "...the question naturally arises, if we claim that the Gospel teaching of our Saviour Christ bids us worship God as did the men of old, and the pre-Mosaic men of God, and that our religion is the same as theirs, and our knowledge of God the same, why were they keenly concerned with marriage and reproduction, while we to some extent disregard it?
 2. "...But it is possible for us to refute this charge by a study of the Hebrew writings. The men renowned for piety before Moses are recorded as having lived when human life was first beginning and organizing itself, while we live when it is nearing its end. And so they were anxious for the increase of their descendants, that men might multiply, that the human race might grow and flourish at that time, and reach its height; but these things are of little moment to us, who believe the world to be perishing and running down and reaching its last end, since it is expressly said that the gospel teaching will be at the door before the consummation of life, while a new creation and the birth of another age at no distant time is foretold.
 3. "Such is one reply, and this is a second. The men of old days lived an easier and a freer life, and their care of home and family did not compete with their leisure for religion; they were able to worship God without distraction from their wives and children and domestic cares, and were in no way drawn by external things from the things that mattered most. But in our days there are many external interests that draw us away, and involve us in uncongenial thoughts, and seduce us from our zeal for the things which please God. The word of the Gospel

teaching certainly gives this as the cause of the limitation of marriage, when it says:

- a. “But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remains that they who have wives be as though they had none. And those that wept as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world is passing away. But I would have you without care. He that is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married cares for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and is divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin cares for the things of the Lord how she may please the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but she that is married cares for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your profit; not that I may cast a cord upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. (**1 Corinthians 7:29-35**)’
4. “This expressly attributes the decrease of marriage to the evils of the time and of external circumstances, such as did not affect the ancients.
5. “And I might give this third reason why the godly men of old were so devoted to the procreation of children. The rest of mankind were increasing in evil, they had fallen into an uncivilized, inhuman, and savage mode of life, they had given themselves up completely to godlessness and impiety, while they themselves, a very scanty remnant, had divorced themselves from the life of the many, and from common association with other men. They were living apart from other nations and in isolation, and were organizing a new kind of polity; they were evolving a life of true wisdom and religion, unmingled with other men. They wished to hand on to posterity the fiery seed of their own religion; they did not intend that their piety should fail and perish when they themselves died, and so they had foresight for producing and rearing children. They knew they could be the teachers and guides of their families, and considered it their object to hand on to posterity the inheritance of their own good qualities. Hence many prophets and righteous men, yea, even our Lord and Saviour Himself, with His apostles and disciples, have come from their line.

6. "And if some of them turned out wicked, like straw growing up with the corn, we must not blame the sowers, nor those who tended the crop, just as we should admit that even some of our Saviour's disciples have erred from the right way through self-will.
7. "And this explanation of the ancient men of God begetting children cannot be said to apply to the Christians today, when by God's help through our Saviour's Gospel teaching we can see with our own eyes many peoples and nations in city and country and field all hastening together, and united in running to learn the godly course of the teaching of the Gospel, for whom I am glad to say we are able to provide teachers and preachers of the word of holiness, free from all ties of life and anxious thoughts.
8. "And in our day these men are necessarily devoted to celibacy that they may have leisure for higher things; they have undertaken to bring up not one or two children but a prodigious number, and to educate them in godliness, and to care for their life generally.
9. "On the top of all this, if we carefully examine the lives of the ancient men of whom I am speaking, we shall find that they had children in early life, but later on abstained and ceased from having them. For it is written that 'Enoch pleased God after Methusaleh was born.' Scripture expressly records that he pleased God after the birth of his son, and tells nothing of his having children afterwards.
10. "And Noah, that just man, who was saved alone with his family when the whole world was destroyed, after the birth of his children, though he lived many years more, is not related to have begotten more children. And Isaac is said, after becoming the father of twins by one wife, to have ceased cohabitation with her. Joseph again (and this was when he lived among the Egyptians) was only the father of two sons, and married to their mother only, while Moses himself and Aaron his brother are recorded as having had children before the appearance of God, but after the giving of the divine oracles as having begotten no more children.
11. "What must I say of Melchisedek? He had no son at all, no family, no descendants. And the same is true of Joshua, the successor of Moses, and many other prophets.

12. "If there is any question about the families of Abraham and Jacob, a longer discussion will be found in the book I wrote about the polygamy and large families of the ancient men of God. To this I must refer the student, only warning him that according to the laws of the new covenant the producing of children is certainly not forbidden, but the provisions are similar to those followed by the ancient men of God."
 - a. (Source: Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel*, Book 1, chapter 9)
 - b. Note that this is *not* included in the Ante-Nicene Fathers set, nor is it among the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers collections. However, it is available online.
- v. Eusebius is not inspired, but this is an interesting perspective he provides from a much earlier time in the church. From what he says:
 1. Christians of his age were not particularly concerned with having a lot of physical descendants.
 2. The reasons, according to Eusebius that the Christians had a different attitude than earlier Jews in the Bible.
 - a. They thought they were living in "*the last times*".
 - b. Life was more complicated and difficult in "modern society" of c. 320 AD than it had been in earlier times in Israel.
 - c. People from all nations all over the world are interested in becoming God's people.
 - i. Many Christians wanted to be free to help them, and to spread the faith by teaching others.
 - ii. Some even led celibate lives to allow more time for teaching others who were coming to faith.
 - d. While many think of men like Abraham and Jacob as examples of having large families, they were polygamists. Also, many famous men of the Bible had small families. For example he cites:
 - i. Noah (three sons)
 - ii. Enoch (only one son mentioned)

- iii. Melchizedek (no descendants, presumably based on what it says in **Hebrews 7:3**, “without genealogy”).
 - iv. Joseph (two sons)
 - v. Moses (two sons) and Aaron (four sons)
 - vi. Joshua and some of the prophets (according to Eusebius) had *no children* at all.
- vi. **Question:** Do you think it *more spiritual* to have a larger family, or a smaller family? What do you *really* think, personally?
1. People can and do make superficial judgments of others today, either way.
 2. Perhaps the answer to the above question is, “*It depends...*” Does a couple have a small family because they want more money, or because they want to be freer to serve other needs in the kingdom of God?
 - a. I knew one missionary family that had two children, but they adopted two more and then took over an orphanage in a third world country for a time.
 - b. My wife and I married relatively late in life, and for some unknown reason did not have our first child until our late thirties. I bought a 7-seater van early in our married life assuming we would have several children. However, 10 years later when we drove the van to the junkyard, we had *just two* children.
 - c. We have listeners this morning who have 1, 2, 3... all the way up to 12 children. (Today is Mother’s Day; and I wish a very Happy Mother’s Day to all the mothers!)
 3. Perhaps we should avoid making judgments of others on the basis of whether they have a large or small family size. Generally, we don’t know the reasons or circumstances of others. As Paul said in **Romans 14**, we shouldn’t be judging others. Some Christians drink wine, some don’t; some eat meat, some don’t; perhaps it is the same regarding having large numbers of children.
 4. Whether we have large families or small families, or if we are single, we should do everything for the glory of God!

- d. Perhaps Jesus changed the way we should look at “family” here. Consider who He considered to be members of His family, and the family He promised his followers would gain.
- i. “Then one said to Him, ‘Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.’ But He answered and said to the one who told Him, ‘Who is My mother and who are My brothers?’ And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.’”
(**Matthew 12:47–50**, NKJV)
 - ii. “So Jesus answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.’” (**Mark 10:29–30**, NKJV)
 1. While some end up losing parents or children when they decide to follow Jesus, they should end up gaining many more (parents, children, brothers, sisters, etc.).
 2. Let us embrace this attitude toward family in the church. Even those who are unmarried or childless can be “mothers and fathers” to many other spiritual children, according to Jesus!
 - iii. Abraham was promised many descendants; we Christians are the *spiritual* children he was promised, as Paul explains in **Romans 4**.

III. Moses, Judge of Every Dispute

- a. Read **Exodus 18:13-27**.
- b. Storyline:
 - i. The next morning, Moses sits to judge the cases of the Israelites. They come to him (alone) to resolve the disputes they have with one another.
 - ii. Since there are so many disputes to resolve, this process goes on for the entire day “from morning until evening”. The people who come for justice must wait for hours.
 1. Think of places where you have to wait in a long line, how frustrating this can be. I think of government offices like motor vehicle licenses, social security, or passport screening at the airport.

2. We have more challenging lines to deal with than usual, with “social distancing” requirements related to the current Covid-19 health concerns.
- iii. Regardless of whether they had to “take a number” or just wait in a long line, Jethro noticed that this was *not good* for either Moses or the people who came to him.
- iv. Moses explains to Jethro that the people are seeking judgment from God when they have a dispute. Moses knows the “ordinances and laws of God”.
 1. Keep in mind that this event appears to be taking place *before* the 10 Commandments and the rest of the Law are given at Mount Sinai.
- v. Jethro gives advice to Moses.
 1. This is too much for you, and not good for the people, either. You are wearing out yourself as well as the people.
 2. Jethro says “I will give you counsel, and God will be with you”.
 3. Moses is to intercede with God on behalf of the people, to bring their concerns to God (a ministry of prayer and petition).
 4. Moses is to teach the people the laws and ordinances of God (a ministry of teaching).
 5. Moses is to appoint other spiritual men to judge most of the cases.
 6. Only the most difficult ones will be judged by Moses (who will be, like the US Supreme Court, the highest judicial authority).
 7. Jethro says that if Moses follows his advice on this, God will strengthen him, and it will be better for everyone involved.
- vi. Moses follows Jethro’s advice and selects the judges.
 1. He selects able, God-fearing men who have integrity and who are not greedy. (They will not be tempted by bribes.)
 2. He sets them over groups of various sizes, to judge the disputes that come up. He sets them over groups of:
 - a. The thousands,
 - b. Hundred,

- c. Fifties, and
 - d. Tens.
- c. **Question:** What is the relationship between this and the similar story about appointing judges over groups, found in **Deuteronomy 1**? Do they both refer to the *same* event, or do they refer to *two different* events?
- i. Read **Deuteronomy 1:6-18**.
 - 1. *Similarities* to the appointment of judges in **Exodus 18** include:
 - a. The issue was how best to resolve disputes and legal conflicts within the community. Moses can't do it alone.
 - b. Delegation of judging most cases from Moses to other capable men.
 - c. Moses set them over the "thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens".
 - d. Moses will hear the hardest cases.
 - 2. *Apparent differences* between the two accounts include:
 - a. The **Deuteronomy 1** account of appointing judges appears to occur as the people are about to *depart* from Mount Sinai; the **Exodus 18** account appears to occur about the time they first arrive at Mt. Sinai, *before* the 10 Commandments are given at Mount Sinai.
 - b. In the first account (only), it says that the idea came from Jethro.
 - c. In the **Deuteronomy** account it says that *the people* are told to select the judges, which Moses then sets over them.
 - 3. Based on the differences, my personal assumption at this time is that these refer to *two different events*: one occurring as they arrived at Mount Sinai, and the other one occurring as they were departing (about two years later).
 - d. On priorities.
 - i. Moses' heart to use his abilities to meet the needs of others, even at great personal sacrifice is to be commended. The problem is that he was not being effective. His priorities were off.

- ii. His top priorities, according to Jethro (and Moses agreed) should have been:
 1. Prayer,
 2. Teaching others what God wants,
 3. Raising up others to see that the many needs were being met, and
 4. Judging the tough cases that no one else was capable of tackling.
- iii. The apostles faced a problem at the beginning of their ministry that has some points of similarity with this account in **Exodus 18**, and they solved it in a similar manner.
 1. Read **Acts 6:1-7**.
 2. An important need was not being met (distribution of bread to the Greek-speaking widows), because the apostles were overextended.
 3. The apostles realized that their top priorities needed to remain prayer and the ministry of the word. These could not be neglected!
 4. Therefore, they asked the people to select spiritual men to oversee the distribution of the bread to the widows.
 5. Then the apostles laid hands on the seven men selected by the people.
- iv. One of the greatest challenges for Christians today: to get our *priorities* ordered properly.
 1. This is a great challenge to me, personally.
 2. Dangers we face include:
 - a. The third soil: getting choked out by the cares of this world.
 - i. “Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”
(**Mark 4:18-19**, NKJV)

- b. Keep doing what we have been doing, out of comfort or habit, without examining (*or re-examining!*) what God wants us to focus on.
 - c. Responding to the most obvious “felt need” expressed by someone, rather than keeping focused on the most important thing.
 - d. Always thinking we are doing the wrong thing, and just jumping from one thing to the next, plagued by self-doubt and ineffectiveness.
3. Certainly this will require prayer, wisdom, honest reflection and advice to assess what our top priorities should be in this life.
4. Each of us must focus on the most important things; and we need to work together as a group to see that all the needs are being met by someone, somehow.
5. When delegating things, the first qualification we must look for is that the person *is spiritual* and has great integrity.
6. Taking stock of what our priorities should be: start with looking at life through the lens of eternity and what God put us here to do. Our priorities should include:
 - a. Repenting of any sin that keeps us out of the kingdom of God goes to #1 on the priority list. Without holiness, *no one* will see the Lord (**Hebrews 12:14**).
 - b. Prayer and meditating on the word of God, excellent and every day.
 - c. Pleasing God and our spouses. Loving our spouses and children; looking out for *their souls*. This means not necessarily giving them what they want, but instead *providing what is best for them spiritually* (**1 Corinthians 7:33-34, Ephesians 5:25-28 & 6:4, 1 Peter 3:1-7**).
 - d. Getting unified and staying unified. Being reconciled with our brothers (**Matthew 5:21-26**).
 - e. Honoring our parents, which includes making sure that their needs are met (**Ephesians 6:2, 1 Timothy 5:8**).

- f. Seeking and saving the lost; making disciples locally and of all nations.
 - i. “for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (**Luke 19:10**, NKJV)
 - g. Serving others; helping those in need with our time and financial resources.
 - i. Consider that this was grounds for distinguishing between the sheep (who would inherit eternal life) and the goats (headed for destruction in everlasting fire) in **Matthew 25:31-46**.
 - h. Keeping our word. Letting our “yes” be “yes”. Get out of commitments we realize we can’t keep.
 - i. “But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’” (**Matthew 5:37**, NKJV)
 - i. Loving our neighbors, being a light in the world, encouraging one another, having iron-sharpening-iron discipling relationships, and maintaining regular fellowship with other Christians (**Romans 13:9**, **Ephesians 5:8**, **Hebrews 3:12-13**, **Proverbs 27:17**, etc.).
 - j. Be hard working, making a living, meeting the material needs of our families and be able to help others (**2 Thessalonians 3:6-12**).
 - k. **One Final Challenge:** Is there something God put you here on earth to do, something important to advance the kingdom of God, *which no one else can do*?
 - i. If so, you had *better make sure you do that!* Otherwise you will have to answer to the Lord for that.
 - ii. For example, *only Moses* could lead the nation and judge the hardest cases. Also, the apostles who had been with Jesus had a unique gift and responsibility regarding “the ministry of the word”.
- e. On seeking and taking advice.

- i. Moses was a leader of hundreds of thousands, yet he had the wisdom and humility to take the advice of his father-in-law when he saw that this was good advice.
- ii. **Question:** What is *your* attitude regarding seeking and taking advice?
 1. I know that for me, there were times in the past where I was very reluctant to seek advice from other disciples in church, since I was suspicious about the agendas they were trying to advance.
- iii. There is some good advice in **Wisdom of Sirach** regarding how to seek wise counsel.
 1. Read **Wisdom of Sirach 6:6**
 - a. Let those who live at peace with you be many, but let your counselors be *one-in-a-thousand!*
 - b. **Questions:** Why must we be so selective, and how do you choose?
 2. Read **Wisdom of Sirach 37:7-15**.
 - a. Plenty of counselors have their own issues and agendas.
 - b. Many years ago, my employer (a large engineering firm) sent me and several young engineers to a consultant to receive “corporate training”.
 - i. The teacher/trainer tried to convince us that the *only measure of success* was how much profit I brought into our company.
 - ii. However, I challenged the trainer in that session regarding what he was advocating. I reminded him that as “Professional Engineers” our first obligation is to do what is best for our clients, *whether or not that advice leads to financial gain for my company*.
 - iii. This is the essence of being a professional (a matter of one’s attitude, regardless of whether the work you are doing is “white collar” or “blue collar”).
 - c. Also, I recently listened to an interview where the spokesman was lamenting a significant recent change in

what had been the historic nature of the *physician-patient relationship*.

- i. The speaker (Robert F. Kennedy Jr.) said that historically, physicians had to be concerned about only one thing: *what was best for the health and well-being of their patients*.
 - ii. He commented that recently, however, this relationship has turned into more of a business model, where physicians are *working for other parties* (insurance companies, hospitals or a government system). He maintained that this change *is not good for the patient!*
- d. A counselor of integrity will have wisdom, and will be looking out *only for the best interest of the person being advised*.
 - i. Those are the kinds of counselors we need to seek.
 - ii. Those are the kinds of people we need to be when giving advice.
- f. Select “just (righteous), God-fearing men”.
 - i. In the LXX, the same Greek word is used in **Exodus 18:21** (δικαιος; Strong’s #1342) as in the New Testament widely, including in **Romans 3**. The word is generally translated “just” or “righteous”.
 - 1. This is the same word also found in the LXX in **Habakkuk 2:4**, quoted in **Romans 1:17**, **Galatians 3:11** and **Hebrews 10:38**, where it says “the righteous (*or the just*) will live by faith”.
 - ii. Notice that when Jethro tells Moses to select righteous, God-fearing men of integrity to do the judging, Moses does NOT respond as if he agreed with Calvin’s doctrine of total depravity.
 - 1. Moses did NOT say to Jethro, “Sorry, but unfortunately there are NO righteous, God-fearing men who hate dishonest gain among the entire nation of 600,000 men; no, not one!”
 - 2. Moses literally “wrote the book” on the fall of man (**Genesis 3**), so I think he should be aware of whether or not the fall rendered all future descendants of Adam “totally depraved”.

3. Clearly Moses selected men who were righteous and God-fearing. Calvin was wrong in teaching total depravity, according to the author of **Genesis 3**.
 - a. Also, consider men like Enoch who “pleased God” and was taken up.
 - b. Noah is described as a “righteous man who was well-pleasing to God (**Genesis 6:9**).
 - c. Job who the Lord said was “blameless, true and God-fearing”, who “abstained from every evil thing” (**Job 1:8, LXX, OSB**).
 - d. Peter spoke of Lot as a righteous man who was tormented in his righteous soul (**2 Peter 2:8**).
 - e. Also consider that Jesus Himself spoke about the guilt that would come upon Jerusalem for the way they treated the righteous men sent to them in the past:
 - i. “that on you may come all the *righteous* blood shed on the earth, from the blood of *righteous* Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.” (**Matthew 23:35, NKJV**)
- iii. Calvinism has as its foundation the teaching of *total depravity of all man as a result of the fall of Adam and Eve*.
 1. The entire system of Calvinism stands or falls on that. Calvinism is wrong. Clearly there were some righteous men in the past.
 2. That does not mean they were flawless; they did commit sins, but they certainly were NOT “totally depraved”.
- g. A pyramid-type *leadership structure*?
 - i. I have seen this story of Moses appointing men as judges referred to by church leaders as, “The Jethro Principle”.
 - ii. How they used this example to create a leadership structure in the church:
 1. Use the arrangement used by Moses in **Exodus 18** as a model for how to organize the church (not only in the local church, but also across a worldwide denomination).

2. Create a leadership pyramid with:
 - a. One man at the top
 - b. Under him are the “leaders of thousands”
 - i. Call them world sector leaders
 - c. Under them are the “leaders of hundreds”
 - i. Call them region leaders or local church leaders
 - d. Under them are the “leaders of fifties”
 - i. Call them house church leaders
 - e. Under them are “leaders of tens”
 - i. Call them Bible talk leaders
 3. Run the church through this centrally controlled leadership structure. Maintain unity, monitor the spiritual condition of everyone, and lead everyone in a coordinated way with this structure.
- iii. The problems I saw with this:
1. I saw *nothing like this in the New Testament*. There, the church was led by elders and deacons.
 2. Leaders were selected *by the people* in the **Deuteronomy 1** and **Acts 6** examples, not by centralized leadership.
 3. No one man over everything in the New Testament
 4. This structure was for judging disputes, not for managing the people.
 5. While there is logic to this (model used by military and corporations), I didn’t see it in the New Testament.
 6. (This was one of the early motivations to read the early Christian writings for me, personally.)
 7. Also, this management structure was also a conduit for giving advice (even on marriage, dating, finances, where to live, etc.). People were appointed by centralized leadership structure and giving the advice they were told, not dis-interested advice.

- a. This was the opposite of what it says in **Wisdom of Sirach** about advice!
8. The leadership structure (also used by the military and by many corporations today) *did* foster a certain degree of unity. However, that unity was based on leadership personalities and a system; it was not based on the Spirit nor on the Word of God.
 - a. Like the Tower of Babel in **Genesis 11**, it was an amazing product of human unified action.
 - b. However, if we build based on humanistic principles of unity and control, we will come to the same end as that famous man-made tower: *what we build will fail*.