

Exodus 18:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.

Analysis

Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them—Jethro's confession 'Now I know' (עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי, *attah yada'ti*) indicates experiential knowledge gained through witnessing God's works. The declaration that 'the LORD is greater than all gods' (כִּי־גָדוֹל יְהוָה מִכָּל־הָאֱלֹהִים, *ki-gadol YHWH mikol-ha'elohim*) is comparative monotheism moving toward absolute monotheism—YHWH surpasses all false gods. The phrase 'for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly' (כִּי בַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר זָדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם, *ki vadavar asher zadu alehem*) means Egypt's proud oppression became the very means of their judgment—drowned in waters meant to drown Hebrew babies. This *lex talionis* (law of retaliation) shows God's justice. Jethro's confession prefigures Gentile acknowledgment of YHWH's supremacy.

Historical Context

As a Midianite priest, Jethro's confession represents a religiously educated person's deliberate choice to acknowledge YHWH above all deities worshipped in ancient Near East.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Jethro's 'now I know' teach that intellectual belief becomes genuine faith through witnessing God's works?
2. What does Egypt's proud oppression becoming their judgment teach about God's poetic justice?

Interlinear Text

יְהוָה	יָדַעְתִּי	כִּי	גָדוֹל	יְהוָה	מִכָּל	הָאֱלֹהִים	כִּי
H6258	Now I know	H3588	is greater	that the LORD	H3605	than all gods	H3588
	H3045		H1419	H3068		H430	
בְּדָבָר	אֲשֶׁר	יָדָו	עָלֵיהֶם:				
for in the thing	H834	wherein they dealt proudly	H5921				
H1697		H2102					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 95:3 (References God): For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

Exodus 15:11 (References God): Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

2 Chronicles 2:5 (References God): And the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods.

Psalms 135:5 (References God): For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.

Luke 1:51 (Parallel theme): He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

Psalms 97:9 (References God): For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.

1 Chronicles 16:25 (References God): For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods.

Daniel 4:37 (Parallel theme): Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

Psalms 119:21 (Parallel theme): Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments.

Nehemiah 9:10 (Parallel theme): And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them. So didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day.

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