

Exodus 18:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God:

Analysis

Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God—Jethro identifies Moses' irreplaceable role: mediator between people and God. The phrase 'for the people to God-ward' (לְעַם מִזְלָחָה, la'am mul ha'Elohim, literally 'for the people opposite God') pictures Moses standing before God on Israel's behalf. This unique mediatorial function cannot be delegated—only Moses brings 'causes' (דברים, d'varim, 'words, matters') to God. This prefigures Christ's exclusive mediatorial role: 'there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus' (1 Tim 2:5). Jethro's wisdom distinguishes between unique calling (mediation) and delegable functions (judging routine matters), a distinction essential for sustainable leadership.

Historical Context

Moses' mediatorial role would be formalized at Sinai where he alone ascends the mountain to receive the law. This unique access to God defined his leadership throughout wilderness wandering.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does distinguishing between irreplaceable calling and delegable tasks prevent both burnout and abdication?
2. What does Moses' mediation prefigure about Christ's exclusive role as mediator between God and humanity?

Interlinear Text

בְּאֶלְ�הִים: תִּהְעַת הַשְׁמָעָה עַתָּה בְּקָלִי אִישׁ אֶצְבָּע
H6258 Hearken now unto my voice I will give thee counsel shall be and God
H8085 H6963 H3289 H1961 H430

מִלְּעָם אֶת הַתִּהְעַת לְעָם בְּאֶלְּהִים: תִּהְעַת הַשְׁמָעָה
H5973 shall be H859 with thee Be thou for the people to God-ward
H1961 H5971 H4136

בְּאֶלְּהִים: אֶל בְּדָבָר יִמְּאַת אֶת אֶת הַזְּבָאת וְבְאֶת
and God that thou mayest bring H935 H859 H853 H1697 H413 H430
H430

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 27:5 (Parallel theme): And Moses brought their cause before the LORD.

Exodus 20:19 (References God): And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

Exodus 3:12 (References God): And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

Genesis 39:2 (Parallel theme): And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

Deuteronomy 5:5 (Parallel theme): (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying,

Proverbs 9:9 (Parallel theme): Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

Exodus 4:16 (References God): And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

Exodus 18:15 (References God): And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God:

Exodus 18:24 (Parallel theme): So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said.

Exodus 4:12 (Parallel theme): Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.