

Exodus 18:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent.

Analysis

And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him—Moses' going out to meet Jethro demonstrates honor toward father-in-law despite Moses' superior position as Israel's leader. The verb 'did obeisance' (עָשָׂת, vayishtachu, 'bowed down, worshipped') shows deep respect—Moses, who speaks with God face-to-face, bows to his father-in-law. This humility models that spiritual authority doesn't eliminate family or social respect. The kiss (קֻשָּׁה, vayishaq) indicates affection, not merely protocol. The mutual inquiry 'they asked each other of their welfare' (שָׁלֹום, vayish'alu ish-l're'ehu l'shalom) shows genuine relationship. Christ models similar honor, submitting to parents despite being their Creator (Luke 2:51).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern culture emphasized honor toward elders and in-laws. Moses' demonstration of respect affirmed cultural propriety while modeling that leadership doesn't breed arrogance.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Moses bowing to Jethro teach that spiritual authority doesn't eliminate respect for others?
2. What does mutual inquiry about welfare reveal about genuine versus merely formal relationships?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּצֵא	וְאַנְתָּה	מֵעַד	לְקַרְבֵּן	וְקָרְבֵּן	וְשָׁפַט	בָּרָא	וַיַּשְׁקַע
went out	And Moses	to meet	his father in law	and did obeisance	and kissed		
H3318	H4872	H7125	H2859	H7812	H5401		
וְיָבֹא	וְיָשַׁאֵל	וְלֹא	לְשָׁלֹום	לְרַעַעַן	וְאֶתְּנָאֵל	וְלֹא	וְיָבֹא
H0	him and they asked	each	other	of their welfare	and they came		
	H7592	H376	H7453	H7965	H935		
בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד							
into the tent							
H168							

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 29:13 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things.

Genesis 18:2 (Parallel theme): And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

Genesis 14:17 (Parallel theme): And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.

Genesis 19:1 (Parallel theme): And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

1 Kings 2:19 (Parallel theme): Bath-sheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand.

2 Samuel 11:7 (Parallel theme): And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org