

# Exodus 4:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.

## Analysis

**And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace**

וְלֹךְ מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּשֶׁב אֶל-יְתָר חֹתְנוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֱלֹכֶה גַּם אֲשֶׁר-בְּמִצְרָיִם וְאֶרְאָה (וְלֹךְ מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּשֶׁב אֶל-יְתָר חֹתְנוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֱלֹכֶה גַּם אֲשֶׁר-בְּמִצְרָיִם וְאֶרְאָה) — Moses returns to Jethro, showing proper honor and requesting release from family obligation. **Let me go... and return unto my brethren**—Moses frames this as family concern: **see whether they be yet alive**. He doesn't reveal the burning bush encounter—either from humility, concern Jethro wouldn't understand, or divine instruction to maintain discretion. **Go in peace** (וְלֹךְ לְשָׁלוֹם)—Jethro's blessing releases Moses with **שָׁלוֹם** (shalom, peace/wholeness). This proper departure contrasts with Moses' flight from Egypt (2:15). God's servants leave well, maintaining relationships and honor.

## Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern culture required adult sons-in-law to request release from family obligations before departing. Moses' courtesy toward Jethro honored his father-in-law and received blessing in return. Jethro will later reunite with Moses (18:1-12), bringing Moses' wife and sons, suggesting their separation was understood as temporary mission, not permanent abandonment.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does Moses' respectful departure from Jethro model appropriate handling of family and relational obligations when God calls to new mission?
2. When has God called you to leave a season or place, and how did you honor those relationships while obeying the call?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְיְהוָה אָשָׁר וּבָהּ אֶל יְהוָה וְיִתְּחַנֵּן וְיִתְּחַנֵּן  
H1980 And Moses I pray thee and return H413 And Jethro his father in law  
H4872 H7725 H3503 H2859

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְאֶחָד לְאֶחָד וְאֶל יְהוָה וְאֶל יְהוָה וְאֶל יְהוָה  
and said H0 H1980 H4994 I pray thee and return H413 unto my brethren  
H559 H7725 H251

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְאֶחָד לְאֶחָד וְאֶל יְהוָה בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֶרְאָה  
H834 which are in Egypt and see whether they be yet alive and said  
H4714 H7200 H5750 H2416 H559

לְשִׁלּוּם: לְרַכְבָּה לְמֹשֶׁה וְיִתְּחַנֵּן  
And Jethro And Moses H1980 in peace H7965

## Additional Cross-References

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**Exodus 3:1** (Word): Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

