



# Parsha Snapshot



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## Yisro



*The Jews have successfully defended themselves against the Amalekite attack.*

Moses' father-in-law Jethro [*Yisro* or *Yitro*] hears reports of the Exodus and subsequent miracles. He travels to meet Moses in the desert, bringing along Moses' wife and children.<sup>1</sup> Moses arranges a special feast in honor of his father-in-law, to whom he recounts the amazing events that have befallen the Jews.

Jethro, observing Moses' exhausting efforts to guide and instruct the Jews, suggests that Moses appoint assistants to help shoulder the burden. Moses accepts his advice, appointing a hierarchy of leaders to govern groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

The Jews arrive at Sinai. G-d sends Moses with a message to the People: "You have seen what I did to Egypt; I bore you on the wings of eagles,<sup>2</sup> and brought you to Me. And now, if you heed My voice and observe My covenant...you shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy People." G-d offers the Jews His Torah; they respond as one, "All that G-d has spoken we shall fulfill!"

G-d commands the Jews to purify themselves in preparation for receiving the Torah. On the sixth of Sivan – fifty days after the Exodus – the Jews wake to thunder and lightning. Mount Sinai is aflame and billowing smoke, and the sound of a Shofar resounds through the camp.

G-d "descends" upon Mount Sinai; for the first and last time in history, an entire nation hears Him speak: "I am the L-rd your G-d, who has delivered you from Egypt." Thus begin the ten commandments.

The first five govern our relationship with the Creator:	The second five govern our interaction with human beings.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accept one G-d</li> <li>2. Reject idolatry</li> <li>3. Do not invoke G-d's name falsely or purposelessly</li> <li>4. Honor your parents<sup>3</sup></li> <li>5. Observe the Sabbath</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Do not murder</li> <li>7. Do not commit adultery</li> <li>8. Do not kidnap</li> <li>9. Do not bear false witness</li> <li>10. Do not covet that which belongs to another</li> </ol>

The Jews beg Moses to speak with them, "and let G-d not speak with us, lest we die!"

"Do not fear," replies Moses. G-d has revealed Himself, not to terrify the Jews, but to uplift them and inspire them with awe. The rest of the Torah will be taught by G-d to Moses, who will communicate it to the people. Moses enters the thick cloud covering the mountaintop; he will spend forty days in Heaven, studying the rest of the Torah.

<sup>1</sup> Moses had left his family in Midian, not wishing to expose them to the suffering of the enslaved Jews.

<sup>2</sup> According to popular translation; the bird *neshet* is actually *not* an eagle, and its precise identity is unknown.

<sup>3</sup> The debt of children to their parents reflects the gratitude every human being owes to G-d.