

Exodus 32

Verses 1-6

Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, “Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”² Aaron said to them, “Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me.”³ Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought *them* to Aaron.⁴ He took *this* from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, “This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.”⁵ Now when Aaron saw *this*, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow *shall be* a feast to the Lord.”⁶ So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, “Come, make us a god who will go before us

In less than 40 days the people had gone from:

We will obey everything that the Lord has commanded us in the covenant

See chapter 24

To making an idol that was forbidden in the 2nd commandment

Here in chapter 32

Aaron said to them, “Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me

It seems as though all of the Israelites wore gold ear rings

This may have been the result of the gifts given to them by the Egyptians

In any case, they had more than enough gold for the project at hand

He fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf

This was not a wooden object covered with gold.

It was an idol made of pure gold.

This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt

Where the Israelites worshipping The Lord "under the symbol" of a golden calf?

No they were not, it was much worse than that.

See Psalm 106:19-22

“They forgot the God who saved them”

How can people forget the God that separated the Red Sea that is 10 miles wide and 2400 feet deep, in just 4 months?

This is very hard to comprehend.

So the next day they offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings;

The people were worshipping an idol and giving it the credit for an event that took place 4 months before it was created.

This really was a miracle!! 😞 😞

And the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

During the last month the following has taken place

1. The Law had just been given,
2. The covenant was ratified,
3. 70 elders and 4 other men ate and drank in the presence of God.

How do the people of Israel react to this spiritual experience?

Enough of this religious stuff, let's party.

This party time included committing adultery and fornication.

Verses 7-14

⁷ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves*.⁸ They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it and have sacrificed to it and said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!’”⁹ The Lord said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people.¹⁰ Now then let me alone, that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation.”¹¹ Then Moses entreated the Lord his God, and said, “O Lord, why does your anger burn against your people whom you have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?¹² Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, ‘With evil *intent* He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth’? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about *doing* harm to Your people.¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit *it* forever.’”¹⁴ So the Lord changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people.

Let's compare verse 7 with verse 11

Verse 7

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves*.

The Lord said these are Moses' people

Verse 11

Then Moses entreated the Lord his God, and said, “O Lord, why does your anger burn against your people whom you have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?

Moses said these are the Lords' people.

It seems like no one wanted to take responsibility for this group of people.

This reminds me of how girls used to fight over me in high school.

One would say you take him and other would say no, you take him. 😊 😊

⁹ The Lord said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people.

It is true that the Jews were an obstinate people, but why would they be any different than the rest of humanity.

God was forced to destroy the world with a global flood because everyone except 8 souls had rejected his leadership.

Now then let me alone, that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation.”

God offered to make a great nation out of Moses

But Moses offered 3 reasons why God should not do this

1. He appealed for God to remember all that he had already done for Israel.
2. He pointed out that the Egyptians would accuse God of leading the people out in order to destroy them.
3. He pleaded with God to remember the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Verses 15-20

¹⁵ Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets which were written on both sides; they were written on one *side* and the other. ¹⁶ The tablets were God’s work, and the writing was God’s writing engraved on the tablets. ¹⁷ Now when Joshua heard the sound of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “There is a sound of war in the camp.” ¹⁸ But he said,

**“It is not the sound of the cry of triumph,
Nor is it the sound of the cry of defeat;
But the sound of singing I hear.”**

¹⁹ It came about, as soon as Moses came near the camp, that he saw the calf and *the* dancing; and Moses’ anger burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain. ²⁰ He took the calf which they had made and burned *it* with fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered it over the surface of the water and made the sons of Israel drink *it*.

The tablets which were written on both sides

This verse was quoted in Exodus 24 when God first told Moses that he would give him the tablets of stone.

The tablets also had the law written on them.

See Exodus 24:12

“I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandments”

The tablets were God’s work, and the writing was God’s writing engraved on the tablets

God made the tablets and he engraved them

As soon as Moses came near the camp, he saw the calf and *the* dancing; and Moses’ anger burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain.

Was Moses conduct appropriate?

Some see this as righteous indignation, and they say, God did not rebuke Moses for breaking the tables

Others see it as uncontrolled anger, and they believe this is why Moses had to cut out the two tablets

See Exodus 34:1

Do you know who the worst sinner in the bible was?

It was Moses. He broke all 10 commandments at one time. 😊😊

He took the calf and burned *it* with fire, ground it to powder, and scattered it over the surface of the water and made the sons of Israel drink *it*.

We have all heard the expression; they will drink the cup of God’s wrath

Here, it was both literal and symbolic

Verses 21-24

²¹ Then Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you, that you have brought *such* great sin upon them?” ²² Aaron said, “Do not let the anger of my lord burn; you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil. ²³ For they said to me, ‘Make a god for us who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ ²⁴ I said to them, ‘Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.’ So they gave *it* to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.”

What did this people do to you, that you have brought *such* great sin upon them?

Aaron gives several excuses

1. It's not my fault; these people are bad to the bone
2. You were gone a long time; we didn't know what to think
3. I just threw some gold into the fire and it formed all by itself.

The 3rd excuse was so ridiculous it deserves some special attention.

²⁴ I said to them, ‘Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.’ So they gave *it* to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.”

This was somewhat like a scene in the terminator movie

See video 3205 Scene from Terminator

<http://www.levickfamily.com/9.13.html>

It makes one wonder if the writers of this movie got the idea for this scene from this text

It just formed all by itself! ☺

How did God feel about Aaron's lack of leadership?

See Deuteronomy 9:20

It was deserving of the death penalty, but Moses prayed for his brother and God spared his life.

Verses 25-29

²⁵ Now when Moses saw that the people were out of control—for Aaron had let them get out of control to be a derision among their enemies—²⁶ then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, “Whoever is for the Lord, *come* to me!” And all the sons of Levi gathered together to him. ²⁷ He said to them, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Every man *of you* put his sword upon his thigh, and go back and forth from gate to gate in the camp, and kill every man his brother, and every man his friend, and every man his neighbor.’” ²⁸ So the sons of Levi did as Moses instructed, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day. ²⁹ Then Moses said, “Dedicate yourselves today to the Lord—for every man has been against his son and against his brother—in order that He may bestow a blessing upon you today.”

For Aaron had let them get out of control to be a derision among their enemies

When religious leaders allow and/or cause the flock to go astray the world is given good cause to ridicule and reject that religion

And all the sons of Levi gathered together to him

Every man *of you* put his sword upon his thigh

About 3000 men of the people fell that day

Is anybody else surprised that only 3000 died?

In a camp of 3 million people that would be 1 out of 1000

Did only a small percentage of the people worship and sacrifice to the golden Calf?

That seems unlikely since God was ready to destroy all the people and start over with the family of Moses.

How did the sons of Levi decide who was worthy of death?

Did they only kill those who were caught in the act of “**playing**”?

One thing we do know for sure is that God will judge all those who sinned against God by worshipping the golden calf.

Verses 30-35

³⁰ On the next day Moses said to the people, “You yourselves have committed a great sin; and now I am going up to the Lord, perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” ³¹ Then Moses returned to the Lord, and said, “Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. ³² But now, if you will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from your book which you have written!” ³³ The Lord said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of my book. ³⁴ But go now, lead the people where I told you. Behold, My angel shall go before you; nevertheless in the day when I punish, I will punish them for their sin.” ³⁵ Then the Lord smote the people, because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made.

Perhaps I can make atonement for your sin

Perhaps Moses was thinking of some kind of animal sacrifice

But now, if you will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from your book which you have written!

This was a very compassionate act on Moses part but we all know God will judge each person by their own actions.

Paul made a similar plea in Romans 9:1-3

Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of my book

We know any sin can be forgiven, except for blasphemy of the Holy Spirit

See Matt 12:22- 31

After witnessing the healing of a demon-possessed man, some religious leaders told Jesus he did it by the power of the devil.

In effect they were saying the work being done by the Holy Spirit thru Jesus was really the work of the devil.

When does a person get to the point where repentance is no longer possible?

Only God knows when that is so, and only He can remove their name from his book.

Here are some other verses that mention the book of life

Daniel 12:1 everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued

Luke 10:20 rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven

Philippians 4:3 whose names are in the book of life

Hebrews 12:23 who are enrolled in heaven

Revelation 13:8 from the foundation of the world

But go now, lead the people where I told you.

God had not given up on this generation yet.

Nevertheless in the day when I punish, I will punish them for their sin

This tells us that there were many more that did not die along with the 3,000, that were deserving of death, but were spared by the grace of God

Even though God spared the lives of many in Israel that day, their sin was not forgiven.

Some judgments are saved until the final judgment day.

Then the Lord smote the people, because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made.

We are not told what punishment was given.