

## Exodus - Part 25 (Chapter 32)

### The Golden Calf

**Exo 32:1** When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him."

**Exo 32:2** Aaron answered them, "Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me."

**Exo 32:3** So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron.

**Exo 32:4** He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, "These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt."

**Exo 32:5** When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, "Tomorrow there will be a festival to the LORD."

**Exo 32:6** So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

**Exo 32:7** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt.

**Exo 32:8** They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, 'These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.'

**Exo 32:9** "I have seen these people," the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people.

**Exo 32:10** Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation."

**Exo 32:11** But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. "LORD," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand?

**Exo 32:12** Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people.

**Exo 32:13** Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.'"

**Exo 32:14** Then the LORD relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

**Exo 32:15** Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands. They were inscribed on both sides, front and back.

**Exo 32:16** The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

**Exo 32:17** When Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting, he said to Moses, "There is the sound of war in the camp."

**Exo 32:18** Moses replied: "It is not the sound of victory, it is not the sound of defeat; it is the sound of singing that I hear."

**Exo 32:19** When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain.

**Exo 32:20** And he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.

**Exo 32:21** He said to Aaron, "What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?"

**Exo 32:22** "Do not be angry, my lord," Aaron answered. "You know how prone these people are to evil.

**Exo 32:23** They said to me, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.'

**Exo 32:24** So I told them, 'Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.' Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!"

**Exo 32:25** Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies.

**Exo 32:26** So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me." And all the Levites rallied to him.

**Exo 32:27** Then he said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.'"

**Exo 32:28** The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died.

**Exo 32:29** Then Moses said, "You have been set apart to the LORD today, for you were against your own sons and brothers, and he has blessed you this day."

**Exo 32:30** The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."

**Exo 32:31** So Moses went back to the LORD and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold.

**Exo 32:32** But now, please forgive their sin--but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written."

**Exo 32:33** The LORD replied to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book.

**Exo 32:34** Now go, lead the people to the place I spoke of, and my angel will go before you. However, when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin."

**Exo 32:35** And the LORD struck the people with a plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.

Exodus 32, featuring the Golden Calf incident, relates to the New Testament by highlighting humanity's need for a mediator and the dangers of idolatry. It contrasts Moses's limited mediation with Jesus as the perfect, sinless high priest, setting the stage for the Gospel's message of grace over law-based condemnation.

#### **Key Connections to the New Testament:**

- **Jesus as the Better Mediator:** In Exodus 32, Moses offers to sacrifice himself for the people's sin, a plea God rejects by stating the sinner will be blotted out. This foreshadows Jesus as the superior High Priest (Hebrews) who actually died to pay the penalty for sin.
- **Moses could never die for the sins of the people because he wasn't sinless.**
- **Idolatry and "Flesh" vs. Spirit:** The Israelites' relapse into idolatry (Exodus 32) is cited in 1 Corinthians 10 as a warning against setting desires on evil things, emphasizing that those who worshiped in the wilderness lacked the transformation of the Holy Spirit.

**1Co 10:1** For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea.

**1Co 10:2** They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

**1Co 10:3** They all ate the same spiritual food

**1Co 10:4** and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

**1Co 10:5** Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

**1Co 10:6** Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.

**1Co 10:7** Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry."

**1Co 10:8** We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did--and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died.

**1Co 10:9** We should not test Christ, as some of them did--and were killed by snakes.

**1Co 10:10** And do not grumble, as some of them did--and were killed by the destroying angel.

**1Co 10:11** These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.

**1Co 10:12** So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

**1Co 10:13** No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

**1Co 10:14** Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.

**1Co 10:15** I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.

**1Co 10:16** Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

**1Co 10:17** Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.

**1Co 10:18** Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar?

**1Co 10:19** Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything?

**1Co 10:20** No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons.

**1Co 10:21** You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.

**1Co 10:22** Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

**1Co 10:23** "I have the right to do anything," you say--but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"--but not everything is constructive.

**1Co 10:24** No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

**1Co 10:25** Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience,

**1Co 10:26** for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

**1Co 10:27** If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat

whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience.

**1Co 10:28** But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience.

**1Co 10:29** I am referring to the other person's conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another's conscience?

**1Co 10:30** If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

**1Co 10:31** So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

**1Co 10:32** Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God--

**1Co 10:33** even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

- **Grace over Law:** The incident illustrates that covenant faithfulness depends on God's grace, not human performance, as the people broke the law immediately after receiving it, pointing towards the need for the new covenant.

**John 1:14** The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of **grace** and truth.

**John 1:16** Out of his fullness we have all received **grace** in place of **grace** already given.

**John 1:17** For the law was given through Moses; **grace** and truth came through Jesus Christ.

**Eph 2:8** For it is by **grace** you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--

- **The "Book of Life":** While God threatens to blot sinners out of his book in Exodus 32:32, the New Testament offers the promise of overcoming through Jesus, assuring believers that their names will not be removed from the Book of Life (Revelation 3:5).

**Rev 3:1** "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

Rev 3:2 Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God.

Rev 3:3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

Rev 3:4 Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.

Rev 3:5 The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels.

- **Delay and Judgment**: Similar to how Israel doubted during Moses's absence, the New Testament warns of scoffers who doubt the return of Jesus (2 Peter 3:4), encouraging faithful waiting.

**2Pe 3:1** Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking.

**2Pe 3:2** I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

**2Pe 3:3** Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires.

**2Pe 3:4** They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

**2Pe 3:5** But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water.

**2Pe 3:6** By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.

**2Pe 3:7** By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

**2Pe 3:8** But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.

**2Pe 3:9** The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

**2Pe 3:10** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

**2Pe 3:11** Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives

**2Pe 3:12** as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.

**2Pe 3:13** But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.