

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

This morning we are continuing our study through the book of Exodus, so please turn with me to Exodus 32.

Moses is still on top of the mountain, where he has been for forty days – receiving instructions receiving instructions from the Lord on the construction of the Tabernacle, this tent, where God was going to meet His people.

And at the end of the chapter, God provided Moses with two stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments – written with the finger of God to share with His people.

So for Moses, the forty days and forty nights of communing with the Father is coming to an end.

Now, we really haven't heard about what the people were doing at the base of the mountain – there is not a lot of insight on what they are doing, what they are talking about or how they are acting.

This morning, we get the insight as the focus now shifts to what the Children of Israel were doing.

Now, turn with me real quick to chapter 24 – let's remind ourselves what happened just before Moses went up the mountain –

[Exo 24:7-8 NKJV] 7 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, **"All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient."** 8 And Moses took the blood, sprinkled [it] on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words."

Church, after reading our text this morning, we have to ask ourselves the question whether or not the Children of Israel were truly sincere when they said they would do all that the Lord wanted them to do.

Church, I believe they were.

The Children of Israel are just like the believers who are excited about the work that God is going to do in their lives.

The mistakes that they made are the same mistakes that many of us make in our own walk.

They underestimated their own weaknesses, they underestimated their personal need for God's strength (remember, they said we will do!!! – they were relying on their own strength) and they underestimated the power of the enemy.

And because of this failure – it didn't take long to go from – we will be obedient to we want to follow another god.

Let's pray...

[Exo 32:1-35 NKJV] 1 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, “Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for [as for] this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”

Now, the scriptures do not reveal to us how long after Moses went up the mountain did it take for the people to come to Aaron with the request to make them a god.

It could have been a week or it could have been thirty nine days.

The point is that during the 40 days, the Children of Israel became impatient and their reaction to waiting was an extreme one - to seek other “gods”.

Turn with me to 2 Peter 3

The early church dealt had to deal with scoffers who mocked the promise of Jesus’ imminent return -

[2Pe 3:11-14 NKJV] 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner [of persons] ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to

these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

Church, we are called to wait.

While we wait, we look forward to His return with extreme joy.

And as we wait, we are to live each new day as if that is the day that Jesus would come.

And if we have that perspective, we will always be ready by serving Lord with all our heart, mind and strength.

That is not the perspective that the Children of Israel had –

Keep in mind that in their request, they are already breaking two of the commandments that they said they would adhere to

No other gods before Me and no graven image or likeness.

2 And Aaron said to them, "Break off the golden earrings which [are] in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring [them] to me." 3 So all the people broke off the golden earrings which [were] in their ears, and brought [them] to Aaron. 4 And he received [the gold] from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, "This [is] your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"

So they tell Aaron to build them a god and what does Aaron do?

He gives them what they want.

Remember, Aaron is the one who is going to be the High Priest.

But instead of telling the people that their request is idolatry, he listens to the people.

He feared the people more than he feared God.

Now, I want to draw your attention to how the enemy works.

Because Satan is the great counterfeiter –

And here we see an example of him counterfeiting the works of God.

Up on the mountain, in chapter 25 – God commanded Moses to receive a free will offering to gather materials for the Tabernacle (so He may dwell among the people so they could worship Him).

Up on the mountain, God had told Moses that He was going to fill craftsmen with the Spirit of God to do the work in the Tabernacle – all the engraving and the workmanship that was going to be done. We saw that at the beginning of chapter 31.

Yet, even before Moses comes down the mountain, we already have a free willed offering being received by Aaron – for the purpose of false worship and we see the sin-inspired work of Aaron (not the Spirit inspired work) as he molded the golden calf.

Now, why did he mold a calf?

The Egyptians worshipped a bull – Apis.

So by molding a calf – Aaron was giving them a god just like the pagan nations around them.

This golden calf was Aaron's representation of Yahweh and now, he tells the people that it was this golden calf that delivered them out of Egypt.

5 So when Aaron saw [it], he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow [is] a feast to the LORD."

It seems to me that Aaron thinks that they are going to be worshipping Yahweh with this golden calf. LORD = Yahweh

6 Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

I asked you to make a note of the word play –

Because this doesn't mean that the people woke up early and had breakfast and got drunk and then decided to play a game of volleyball.

The Hebrew word has a sexual connotation to it. It speaks of them having drunken relations in front of the idol (a drunken orgy) – and they did this because that was what the pagan nations would do with their idols.

7 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted [themselves].

Notice that God addresses the Child of Israel as Moses's people – implying that He was in the process of disowning because of their rebellion – "They are all yours Moses"

Remember, Moses didn't know what the people had done on the base of the mountain – but God did and He is going to tell Moses exactly what they did.

8 "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This [is] your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!' " 9 And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it [is] a stiff-necked people! 10 "Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."

The Children of Israel did not honor the covenant they had entered with God –

Therefore God tells Moses, because they are stiff-necked – by the way, the phrase is only found seven times in the Bible, all in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy, all about Israel. And it is a term used for farm animals that don't respond when the rope is tugged.

So because they are stiff-necked, I am going to wipe them out and I will start this all over again with a new bunch of people that you will lead Moses.

Church, I think that God is testing Moses.

What kind of shepherd is Moses going to be?

Is he going to say – sounds good to me God – smoke them all?

Or is he going to respond with grace and patience?

Church, how do we respond when people do stupid stuff???

11 Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 "Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. 13 "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit [it] forever.' " 14 So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.

Here we have Moses interceding on behalf of the Children of Israel.

The first thing he does is he gives the people back to God – “They are your people, not mine. They belong to You. Only You can be God over them.

Then he appeals to God on the basis of grace – God you delivered them out of Egypt, not because we deserved it but by Your grace alone.

Then he appeals to God on the basis of glory – “What are the Egyptians going to say about you? They are going to think that You are cruel if you brought us out to the wilderness only to kill us.

Then he appealed to God based on His goodness. “Lord you promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” You are faithful. You are good. Keep Your promises.”

By the way, we made the same appeal this morning as we sang “Your grace is enough” – remember Your promise, oh God.

And upon hearing Moses intercede for the people – God relented.

Now, I asked you make a note of the word relent.

This doesn't mean that God's mind was changed.

God is immutable.

The most famous example in scripture of God relenting is found in the book of Jonah –

God sends Jonah to Nineveh but Jonah goes the other way and gets swallowed up by a big fish where he remains for three days.

After being spit out by the big fish, Jonah goes into Nineveh and cries out “Forty days and you guys are toast”

But the people of Nineveh responded with genuine repentance and therefore God relented from His judgment.

God relenting is an anthropomorphism – an attribute of a human trait that is used to describe God.

15 And Moses turned and went down from the mountain, and the two tablets of the Testimony [were] in his hand. The tablets [were] written on both sides; on the one [side] and on the other they were written. 16 Now the tablets [were] the work of God, and the writing [was] the writing of God engraved on the tablets. 17 And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "[There is] a noise of war in the camp." 18 But he said: "[It is] not the noise of the shout of victory, Nor the noise of the cry of defeat, [But] the sound of singing I hear."

Joshua had accompanied Moses part way up the mountain.

He camped there, for forty days himself, however, he was not in the presence of God like Moses was or did he have the presence of anyone else like the Children of Israel at the base of the mountain.

We don't know if he had a sleeping bag, we don't know what he did for food.

If anyone had a cause to complain – it was Joshua.

Joshua proves that the Children of Israel could have easily waited – because he did.

What was Joshua's secret?

Joshua was Moses' servant.

If he was told to wait - he waited.

Church, we ought to rejoice in the simplicity of serving God by waiting in His will.

19 So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf [and] the dancing. So Moses' anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.

Moses breaking the tablets was a reflection of what the Children of Israel had done when the fashioning of the golden calf.

They had broken the covenant -

20 Then he took the calf which they had made, burned [it] in the fire, and ground [it] to powder; and he scattered [it] on the water and made the children of Israel drink [it].

Now, why did Moses make the Children of Israel drink golden calf kool-aid?

The first thing it does is it shows that Moses was someone who didn't walk in the fear of man. His goal was godliness.

So we see him destroy the calf –

He makes them drink it to show them the consequences of sin – I am pretty sure that drinking gold wasn't good for their insides.

But also, by drinking the gold, it was going to make it unusable as now, it would be corrupted by human waste. So it would prevent people from using the gold that was used on the golden calf.

21 And Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you that you have brought [so] great a sin upon them?" 22 So Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of my lord become hot. You know the people, that they [are set] on evil. 23 "For they said to me, 'Make us gods that shall go before us; [as for] this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' 24 "And I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them break [it] off.' So they gave [it] to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out."

When Moses confronts Aaron – Aaron first blames the people and then he even tries to blame Moses – you took too long Moses.

And then he tries to come up with the lamest excuse ever – I threw the gold in the fire and out popped the golden calf, even though, in verse 4, we are told that Aaron fashioned the golden calf.

Church - Often times, when a person is caught in sin, they will start to blame others and then they will describe it as a natural progression, rather than a transgression. And then they will suggest that it just happened and that they don't know how.

When God confronted Adam with his sin – what did he do? Blame Eve

When God confronted Eve with the sin – what did she do? Blame the serpent.

Compare that to when Nathan confronted David with his sin. His response was, "I have sinned against the Lord"

David didn't say, it was Bathsheba's fault for bathing out in the open.

David didn't say, "I was having a bad day and all of a sudden I find myself in an adulterous affair"

He had admitted his transgression.

25 Now when Moses saw that the people [were] unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to [their] shame among their enemies), 26 then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, "Whoever [is] on the LORD's side--[come] to me!" And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. 27 And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.' " 28 So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And

about three thousand men of the people fell that day. 29 Then Moses said, "Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother."

Even after seeing Moses break the stone tablets and after being forced to drink to golden calf kool-aid, some with the Israelites continued to be out of control.

So Moses had to do what Aaron failed to do.

So Moses issues a challenge to the people and the Levites respond.

So Moses appoints the Levites to bring judgment upon those who were unrepentant.

30 Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." 31 Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! 32 "Yet now, if You will forgive their sin--but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written."

Moses once against attempts to intercede for the people -

He wants to make atonement for their sin – the problem was that Moses was sinner.

God said “no” to the request of Moses; yet we can say that God looked ahead to the sacrifice of One greater than Moses who would give Himself for the people, bringing full and complete atonement.

And of course this point to our Savior Jesus Christ.

33 And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book. 34 "Now therefore, go, lead the people to [the place] of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin."

35 So the LORD plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made.

God agreed to spare the nation as a whole, but He definitely reserved the right to judge individual sinners.

And He did –

You see, God is going to order them to move in the next chapter.

And when they get to the banks of the Jordan, they are going to refuse to cross and they will wander the wilderness for forty years until everyone older than 20 dies (besides Caleb and Joshua).

Did God forgive them, yes –

Nevertheless, there would still be repercussions for their sin.

[Gal 6:7 NKJV] 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

Amen.

Let's pray...

