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Exodus 32

(2020)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Exodus 32.

(A brief overview of the main topics).

Topics.

- Aaron makes a golden calf and builds an altar before it.
- People offer burnt offerings before the altar and eat drink and play.
- The LORD says to Moses, "Let me consume and destroy the people."
- The LORD tells Moses he desired to raise up a great nation from him.
- Moses' breaks the two tablets at the foot of Mount Sinai.
- Aaron tells Moses he threw gold in the fire and out came a golden calf.
- The sons of Levi are ordained for the service of the LORD.
- Moses prays, the LORD will forgive the peoples sin, the LORD relents.
- God tells Moses He will blot out of His book whoever sins against Him.
- God tells Moses to lead and He will send His angel before him.

INTRODUCTION: in the book of Exodus, God fulfilled His promise to Abraham by multiplying Abraham's descendants into a great nation delivering them from slavery in Egypt to journey to the Promised Land, and then binding them to Himself with a covenant at Mount Sinai. Moses, under the direct command of God and as leader of Israel, received the Ten Commandments from God, along with other laws governing Israel's life and worship. He also led the nation in building the Tabernacle, a place where God's presence can dwell among his people and where they can make sacrifices for sin. Most Jews and Christians recognise Moses as the author, writing sometime after the Exodus from Egypt (about 1445 B.C.). Note: the promise God made to Abraham will be perfectly fulfilled when Christ returns in glory and all those (Jews and Gentiles) who belong to God's Kingdom are gathered to him. (See also the introduction to chapter one).

NOTE: for information of people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

EXODUS 32:4

Moses on Mount Sinai and the Golden Calf that Aaron Made.

- **Exodus 32:4:** Aaron received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

The people of Israel did not know what had happened to Moses so they told Aaron to make gods to go before them so Aaron told the people to bring all the gold rings in their ears to him so they did. Remember the Egyptians gave their jewellery to the Israelites as they were leaving Egypt. From all the gold the people brought to Aaron he moulded a golden calf and the people proclaimed, "These are our gods, O Israel, who brought us up out of the land of Egypt!" When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before golden calf and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD," and the people rose up early the next morning and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings before the altar and sat down to eat and drink and play.

NOTE: later in history when Israel divided into two nations (the ten tribes of Israel and the two tribes of Judah) Jeroboam head to the ten tribes also made a golden calf and caused Israel to continually sin by worshipping these two calves.

- So, the king (Jeroboam) took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, "You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt." And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. ³⁰Then this thing became a sin, for the people went as far as Dan to be before one. (1 Kings 12:26-30).
- "And now you (Jeroboam) think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David (Rehoboam), because you are a great multitude and have with you the golden calves that Jeroboam made you for gods (2 Chron. 13:8)

EXODUS 32:8

- **Exodus 32:8:** They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Obviously, the LORD sees that the people have not only made a golden calf and worshipped it, but also offered sacrifices to it. The LORD seeing how the people have grossly corrupted themselves wants to destroy them all. Imagine for a moment, God has brought them out of Egypt by amazing wonders and they all entered into a covenant with the LORD to be His people and now the LORD sees them worshipping a golden calf in the same way the Egyptians would.

EXODUS 32:9-10

- **Exodus 32:9-10:** And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. ¹⁰Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you."

The LORD desired to consume this corrupted and rebellious generation so he could raise up a great nation from Moses. Since Moses was a Levite God would still have been keeping His promise to Abraham if He had destroyed the people and raised up an entirely new nation from Moses.

EXODUS 32:11-14

- **Exodus 32:11-14:** But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, "O 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? ¹²Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. ¹³Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.'" ¹⁴And the LORD relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.

Moses earnestly intercedes for Israel and pleads with God to turn from His anger and remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, to who He swore by His own self, saying:

- I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.

To help his defence for Israel Moses tells the LORD if He does destroy his people the Egyptians will say Israel's God brought the people out with the evil intention of killing them in the mountains, after seeing Moses praying

with such passion for Israel the LORD relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on people. It is certain Moses was as upset with the people's worship of the golden calves as the LORD was, but amongst the people were children and faithful men and women as the following verses show and through all the wilderness journeys Moses would have bonded in friendship with many of them.

EXODUS 32:15-16

- **Exodus 32:15-16:** Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets that were written on both sides; on the front and on the back they were written. ¹⁶The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

Moses had been on the Mount Sinai forty days and during that time the LORD gave him two tablets of the testimony (God's laws for Israel) that were the work of God and the writing of God, engraved on the tablets on both sides; on the front and on the back. Moses goes down with these two tablets in his hands.

EXODUS 32:17-20

- **Exodus 32:17-20:** When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "There is a noise of war in the camp." ¹⁸But he said, "It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing that I hear." ¹⁹And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. ²⁰He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it.

The following verses show that prior to Moses' spending forty days with the LORD on Mount Sinai Joshua had gone up the mountain with Moses

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- The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction." ¹³So Moses rose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God --- NOW GO TO VERSE --- ¹⁵Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. ¹⁷Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. ¹⁸Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights (Exodus 24:1-18)

It is possible the LORD called Joshua up the mountain with Moses so that Moses had some company while he ate and slept during the forty days. Moses and Joshua may have camped on the mountain during the forty days and at certain times during the day and the evening the LORD may have called Moses alone into the cloud into the presence of the LORD and when it was time to eat and sleep Moses would return to Joshua. Joshua is not mention from the time he went up the mountain with Moses until now when we see him coming down the mountain with Moses. The most likely reason Joshua is not mentioned until now is because he is not important to this part of the story because he was not with Moses when Moses went before the LORD.

EXODUS 32:21-24

- **Exodus 32:21-24:** And Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?" ²²And Aaron said, "Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil. ²³For they said to me, 'Make

us gods who shall go before us. 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.' ²⁴So I said to them, 'Let any who have gold take it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf."

Imagine Moses bewilderment when he realised Aaron had made such an abomination for the people to worship. Aaron most likely feeling terrible now that Moses has shown up tells Moses the people said make us gods because we do not know what has happened to Moses and rather than admit he spent a great amount of time moulding the gold into the calf tells Moses he threw the gold in a fire and out came a golden calf. Moses must have been just as stunned at this blatant lie as he was when he saw the golden calf.

EXODUS 32:25-29

- **Exodus 32:25-29:** And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies), ²⁶then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the LORD'S side? Come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered around him. ²⁷And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor'" ²⁸And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell. ²⁹And Moses said, "Today you have been ordained for the service of the LORD, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day."

Because the Levites put God first and were willing to stand with Moses against their own family members, they were ordained for the service of the LORD meaning they were ordained as priests before God and before the people and for the service of the tabernacle. Obviously, no Christian today is called to fight or go to war against their enemies. We live in a totally different age of God's timetable Jesus in his Famous Sermon on the Mount calls us to love our enemies meaning do-good to them and not harm.

For further information, see:

- Matthew chapter five in, Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

EXODUS 32:30-35

- **Exodus 32:30-35:** The next day Moses said to the people, "You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." ³¹So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Alas, this people have sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. ³²But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written." ³³But the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book. ³⁴But now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them." ³⁵Then the LORD sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf, the one that Aaron made.

Moses goes to the LORD to make atonement for the people's gross sin. The following chapter shows that Moses at this time did not go back up the mountain to the LORD, but into the tent of meeting (Exod. 33:8-9) to make atonement for Israel's sin. Moses says to the LORD, "If you do not forgive their sin, please blot me out of your book that you have written." These words of Moses shine a brilliant spotlight on the love Moses had for the people. No doubt it was because of this love that God chose Moses to lead his people.

Though the LORD would have rejoiced at Moses love and passion for the people He would not be blackmailed by such a threat. The LORD tells Moses "Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book," and a plague came upon the people who worshipped the golden calf. The LORD tells Moses to lead the people to the place which He had spoken to him about.

For further information concerning God's book, see the title:

- The Book of Life and the Book of the Lamb.
- The Book of Life and the Lake of Fire.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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