

Prayer List

Cyndie, Nichole & Lauren
Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia
Josh
Daniel
Olene

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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The Calf of Gold (Exodus 32)

By Jon W. Quinn

In Exodus 32 we find recorded an incident that holds many important lessons for us today. In fact, the New testament refers to the incident there with admonition not to allow similar things to deter us today from serving God faithfully. Consider the incident itself, and then we'll look at some points to be made from it.

Aaron And The Golden Calf (Ex. 32)

Moses had delayed coming down from the mountain, at least in the peoples' view (Exodus 32:1). They had been led to Mount Sinai by Moses, and had witnessed powerful signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea. God was truly with them. But they could not see Him. They had seen abundant evidence of His power and might, but they could not see Him. Could the plagues in Egypt be explained naturally? Perhaps the splitting of the Sea to allow them safe passage was the result of tidal influences. Or maybe the gods of the Egyptians were angry with them and these things were their punishment. At least one could actually see the idols of the Egyptians, but not so with the God of Moses. Sure, He had also been the God of their ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That had not kept them from becoming slaves.

For whatever foolish reasons, the people gathered together and asked Aaron to "make us gods." Now Aaron was much too cautious for that! He collected gold from the people and fashioned a calf (Exodus 32:2-4). Then Aaron built an altar to the calf and proclaimed a feast "to the Lord" (Exodus 32:5). The actual Hebrew word Aaron used for "Lord" was "Jehovah". You see, Aaron thought it best to continue

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This Week's Question:

What man met the Lord at the oaks of Mamre?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Peter - Acts 10:5-6

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to serve Jehovah God Almighty, but was willing to make a golden calf to represent Him because of the people's desire.

God informed Moses that the people were sinning. Moses interceded for them, pleading for God's mercy, even stating his own willingness to die with them (vss. 7-14). Then, Moses returned, broke the tablets of stone containing the law, and destroyed the calf (vss. 15-20). After this, Moses confronted Aaron. Aaron tried to put the blame on the people (Exodus 32:21-24). In the following mayhem, 3000 were slain (vs. 28). Note Moses' later recollection of this event: "I took hold of the two tablets and threw them from my hands and smashed them before your eyes. I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you had committed in doing what was evil in the sight of the LORD to provoke Him to anger. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was wrathful against you in order to destroy you, but the LORD listened to me that time also. The LORD was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him; so I also prayed for Aaron at the same time. I took your sinful thing, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small until it was as fine as dust; and I threw its dust into the brook that came down from the mountain." (Deuteronomy 9:17-21).

Beware Leaders Who Forget God

Leaders of God's people can succumb to temptation. Only faith in God is a sure thing. Our fellow human beings will sometimes fall short, even the best of us.

There are many religious leaders in America leading in all kinds of different directions. In Aaron's day, there was one right response to what the people had requested. It was not to make gods for them to worship. It was not even to make one idol of God and say it represented Jehovah. It was to teach the will of God concerning the matter. It was to teach God's will even if people did not like it or refused to listen. It was to teach God's commandments even if that meant becoming unpopular. It was to teach God's truth even at risk of harm or death. It is the same way today. "solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own

desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

Paul wrote, "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." and then refers to God as "and then speaks of God as "...King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever." (1 Timothy: 1:5;17) We simply cannot picture God, and to try to visually represent Him by things of this world is insulting to His eternal glory.

So, honor men and women of righteousness for their faith, love and courage, but let your first love and loyalty be to the Lord, and if a good person goes bad, don't follow them; don't let it hurt your faith.

God Demands Obedience

That is true today as well. We have no business calling Jesus "Lord" if we will not obey Him (Luke 6:46). Remember that confession you made at the beginning of your discipleship: "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God."

God is the Creator of the universe. He is Almighty and we must not be so arrogant as His creatures to dismiss His commandments as unimportant. Most of the world seem to have such a casual attitude toward God's commandments. So many think the Lord may be disobeyed without consequence. How sad. There is not an iota of Biblical evidence that one may live out his or her life minimizing the commandments of God and "going with the flow" of society and still be rewarded with heaven one day (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 John 3:2-3; 5:3-4; Revelation 22:14-15).

Idolatry Today

Idolatry can be a problem for God's people today. Craving evil things is a form of idolatry. In fact, Paul tells us to learn from the sad example of what Aaron and the people did (1 Corinthians 10:6-7;11). We learn that making money and things more important in our lives than walking with God is idolatry (Colossians 3:3-7). So, as John puts it, there is still the need to beware of idolatry: "Little children, guard yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21).

One final point; We recall how Moses plead unto God not to destroy the people for their sin. We also have one who makes intercession for us today. As good as Moses was, we have an even better intercessor. It is our Lord and King; High Priest and Savior; Jesus (Hebrews 7:22-25). From Expository Files 12.10; October 2005