**THE GOLDEN CALF: PART 2**

Sunday School Lesson 11

*Wandering in the Wilderness*

Exodus 32

3/16/2025

**Lesson Review:** We moved forward to Exodus 32 last week to study the events that took place while Moses was on the mount receiving the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of stone from the Lord. Specifically, we looked at Israel’s creation of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We will be continuing our study of that story this morning, but let’s review some truths from the last lesson before moving forward. First, the people finally found their chance to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ against God’s leadership. Israel did not seek leadership from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Instead, they demanded for him to make them new \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Notice that the people were also ready to leave \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ behind, even though he had brought them out of Egypt. They showed no \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for his well-being. Notice that the people also had just agreed to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the Lord, and they were already looking to break the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that He had given to them. Second, Aaron \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ his chance at leadership by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ to the people. Notice that while he did not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with the people, he did \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to stand up to them and stop them from their foolishness. Notice that Aaron tried to blend \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ worship with the worship of the one true God. Third, the people had \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_so many previous chances to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God properly. Notice that this was the first time the people had \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ since the crossing of the Red Sea. Lastly, notice that the people had so many opportunities to see God and His presence, but they still chose to create some \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of a “god” instead. Today, we will see God and Moses’ response to this event.

1. **EVEN WHILE SPEAKING TO MOSES, THE LORD SAW THE BEHAVIOR OF THE PEOPLE.**
2. **Notice that the Lord saw the people corrupting themselves.** *Exodus 32:* *7 And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: 8a They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. Genesis 6:12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.* Even though Moses was still on Mount Sinai, receiving the commandments of God, the Lord was fully aware of what was happening in the camp below. Nothing is hidden from His sight. The people may have assumed that since Moses was gone, they were free to act as they pleased, but God sees all, and their sin was fully exposed before Him. They did not gradually slip into idolatry; it happened quickly, as the verse states. Their hearts had already been drifting from the Lord, and the moment they thought they were unsupervised, their true nature was revealed. The Lord had sanctified the people of Israel, but their sinfulness had corrupted them. God desires for His children to be clean.
3. **Notice that the Lord saw the stiffnecked condition of the people.** *Exodus 32:9 And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Deuteronomy 9:13 Furthermore the Lord spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Proverbs 29:1 He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.* The Lord did not just see the Israelites corrupting themselves in this one instance. He saw their ongoing pattern of rebellion. When He declared that they were a stiffnecked people, He was pointing to their continual resistance against Him. God had been patient with them, yet He saw that their stiffnecked condition was ongoing and deeply embedded within them. This was not a moment of weakness but a continual rejection of His authority. This should serve as a sobering reminder to believers. While God has forgiven and forgotten our sins, He does recognize our general direction and pattern of behavior. Are we moving closer to Him, or are we turning away?
4. **EVEN WHILE SPEAKING JUDGMENT TO MOSES, THE LORD WAS READY TO SHOW MERCY.**
5. **Notice that the Lord had a righteous anger toward Israel, and they deserved to be consumed.** *Exodus 32:10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.* The Lord was very angry at Israel for their idolatry and disobedience. He made it clear to Moses that He was ready to consume the people. It would have been just for the Lord to do so. He could have still carried out His promise to Abraham through the seed of Moses. We can look at other examples in the Bible to prove out the Lord’s justice. The Lord told Noah that the world was going to be destroyed by a flood because of the wickedness of mankind. While Noah was saved, the Lord carried out His judgment on the world. Our righteous God has a right to be angry at sin.
6. **Notice that while God told Moses to let Him alone, He was obviously willing to hear Moses’ intercession on behalf of the people.** *Exodus 32:7 And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: 14 And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people. 15 And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written.* We must consider this conversation with Moses in light of what we know about God and His characteristics. God is all-knowing. God is perfect. God does not change. With this in mind, we understand that God knew exactly what was going on with Israel and how Moses would respond. Even still, God wanted for Moses to petition Him on behalf of the people. This is why He started the conversation by telling Moses to go down to his people. He allowed Abraham to intercede on behalf of Lot, and He sent Jonah to warn Nineveh.
7. **Notice that Moses’ intercession on behalf of the people focused on God’s holy name and on His faithful promise.** *Exodus 32:* *12a Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out 13a Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, 30b Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. 32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.* What was the message of Moses’ intercessory prayer? He had two main objects of his message. The first was to acknowledge the name of the Lord. He pointed out that the Lord’s name would be spoken against when nations heard what He had done to His people in the wilderness. God’s name is holy and sacred. It is special, and the name above all other names. Second, Moses focused on God’s promise to Abraham. Of course, Moses provides us a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ as our Intercessor. Christ goes before the Father carrying His holy name. He also goes before the Father to speak the new covenant. What is that? It’s the promise God has made with man to offer salvation.
8. **EVEN WHILE SHOWING MERCY, THE LORD STILL REQUIRED PROPER CHASTENING.**
9. **Notice that while Moses interceded for the people, he was quick to carry out punishment upon them.** *Exodus 32:19 And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. 20 And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. 28 And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.* While Moses had entreated the Lord, he still understood that some punishment needed to be carried out. First, he made the Israelites drink of the gold which they had used to make their false god. This was very symbolic. The Lord had provided them water to drink. He wanted to sustain them in the wilderness. Instead, they gave credit to this golden calf. Moses wanted to show them that the cow had no power to sustain them. Additionally, he knew that some would have to face capital punishment for what they had done. He sent out the Levites to carry out this judgment upon the people.
10. **Notice that the Lord dealt with those who had participated in the wickedness. He sent plagues to punish the people.** *Exodus 32:33 And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. 34 Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. 35 And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.* While the Lord did not carry out the full scope of His judgment upon the people, He did direct His angel to put plagues upon the people. Moses offered to take their punishment upon himself, but the Lord would not accept this. (Only Christ could do this.) This offers two reminders to us. First, salvation is an individual choice. While the nation was spared, each individual person needed to address what they had done. Second, believers should not expect that the Lord will withhold chastening on His children. If we disobey and harden ourselves against Him, He will address it.