

## **FAITH SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON**

**January 31, 2010**

### **The Golden Calf**

**Focal Passage: Exodus 32**

Cross References: 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12

**Central Idea:** While God was instructing Moses on how His people should live, they turned to idolatry and suffered the consequences their sin.

**Lesson Idea:** Devoting your worship to anyone or anything beside God will insult your Creator and bring wrath on yourself.

**Historical Context:** I used to think that the people of Israel in this story reverted back to the idolatry of Egypt, because they didn't know any better. I thought that Moses was on the mountain receiving the Ten Commandments, and they built the Golden Calf before knowing the second command was not to make any graven images. That was not the case. Moses had already instructed the people about God's commands (see Ex 20). God took Moses back up the mountain to give him tablets of stone with the commands carved into them for the people to keep inside the Ark of the Covenant as a reminder. He also was sharing further instructions. The people got impatient as Moses was gone for forty days and nights and decided to "do their own thing."

#### **January 31<sup>st</sup> Outside the Walls**

Every time there is a fifth Sunday in a month, we try to do something that takes the Gospel "outside the walls" of the church building to our community. On Jan 31<sup>st</sup> we will be doing a food distribution. We encourage you to bring canned goods and soups and other non-perishable food items to church with you. We will meet back at church at 2:00 pm to box the food. Then we will take it out to those who need it and share the love of Jesus with them.  
Plan to come join us for this "Hands-On Mission" project.

#### **Bible in a Year Daily Readings January 24-31**

**Jan 24 Exodus 28 - 30**  
**Jan 25 Exodus 31 - 34**  
**Jan 26 Exodus 35 - 37**  
**Jan 27 Exodus 38 - 40**  
**Jan 28 Leviticus 1 - 4**  
**Jan 29 Leviticus 5 - 7**  
**Jan 30 Leviticus 8 - 10**  
**Jan 31 Leviticus 11 - 13**

**Read the Bible Through  
Highlights of the Week:  
January 24-31, 2010**

**Ex 28-31:** Instructions for worship

**Ex 32:** The Golden Calf

**Ex 33:** The Journey continues

**Ex 34:** New tablets and commitments

**Ex 35-38:** Building the Tabernacle

**Ex 40:** Tabernacle set up and the Glory of the LORD fills it

**Lev 1-6:** Various Offerings

**Ex 7-9:** Setting apart the priests

**Ex 10:** The sin of Nadab and Abihu

**Lev 11-15:** Cleanness and health

## January 31 Lesson

Ex 32:1-6

### *The Golden Calf*

*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." 2 Aaron answered them, "Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me." 3 So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. 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, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." 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." 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.*

#### **QUESTIONS:**

The people had seen God do amazing things in bringing them out of Egypt, but now after only 40 days, they decided to abandon what God had told them through Moses and do things their own way.

At what times are people tempted to get impatient with the LORD?

What are some ways that people today “create their own gods” or decide their own way of worshipping?

In vs 5 Aaron announced that there would be a “festival to the LORD” the next day.

What proof do these verses offer that their festival had nothing to do with God?

What are some ways that your worship and life might be less than pleasing to God?

Ex 32:7-14

### *God's Complaint*

*7 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. 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, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.' 9 "I have seen these people," the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people. 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." 11 But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. "O Lord," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? 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. 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.' " 14 Then the LORD relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.*

#### **QUESTIONS:**

Why did God call the people “stiff-necked?”

In vs 10 what does God tell Moses He would do?

Why did God not destroy them?

We see the power of intercessory prayer in this passage. Moses “sought the favor of the LORD his God” in behalf of his people. What reasons did Moses give when he asked for God’s mercy?

As we pray, we should always seek God's will. Moses prayed to God from God's perspective and how did God respond?

"Mercy" is when God doesn't give us the punishment we deserve. Think about times in your life that God has been merciful and thank Him for it.

#### **Ex 32:15-24**

##### ***The Great Confrontation***

**15** Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands. They were inscribed on both sides, front and back. **16** The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets. **17** When Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting, he said to Moses, "There is the sound of war in the camp." **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." **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. **20** And he took the calf they 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. **21** He said to Aaron, "What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?" **22** "Do not be angry, my lord," Aaron answered. "You know how prone these people are to evil. **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.' **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!"

#### **QUESTIONS:**

In vs 15-16 what words or phrases describe how special the tablets were and why?

How do these same phrases apply to the Bible today and how should we treat it? (see 2 Timothy 3:16 and Hebrews 4:12)

In vs 20 who did Moses blame for what happened and how did Aaron respond?

Read vs 3-4 again and tell how it contradicts Aaron's lie in vs 24?

Why are leaders held to greater blame when a group of people sin?

How should you pray for your leaders?

#### **Ex 32:25-35**

##### ***The Grave Choice***

**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. **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. **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.'" **28** The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died. **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." **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." **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. **32** But now, please forgive their sin--but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written." **33** The LORD replied to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book. **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." **35** And the LORD struck the people with a plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.

#### **QUESTIONS:**

Why was it so important to Moses that the people of Israel not become a "laughingstock" to their enemies?

What choice did Moses tell people to make?

In what ways do people's choices about God affect their lives today?

In vs 30 Moses hopes to make "atonement" for their sin. He offers to have himself blotted out of the LORD's book. How did the LORD respond to his offer?

God promised He would punish those who deserved punishment and lead the rest of His people on their journey. When does vs 34 say that God would bring punishment?

**APPLICATION**

The people's sin carried serious consequences, some died by the sword and some by a plague. Vs 35 says that it was "because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made."  
Are there sins in your life you need to confess to the Lord and repent of and ask for His mercy?

Are you reserving your worship for God and God alone?

What about your life indicates that God is the supreme Authority over your life?

Are there people that need you to intercede for them? How can you pray for them from God's perspective? What do you need to ask God to do for them?