



Grades 4–5 • Lesson 58

God Punishes Idolatry

Exodus 32:1–4, 32:11–14, 32:21–24, 32:35; 1 Timothy 2:5

Name _____

Moses broke the stone tablets when he saw the Israelites worshipping the golden calf. Draw a line to connect the pieces of each command, then circle the two commands the Israelites broke when they made the calf.



Answer: Commandments 1 and 2

Memory Verse

Use the code below to fill in the missing vowels in the verse.

a = I e = Z i = h o = ñ u = ù

And God spoke all these w____rds, saying, “I am the L____rd your God,

who br____g__ht you out of the land of ____gypt, out of the house

of sl____v____ry. You shall have no other g____ds before me. **Exodus 20:1–3**

What You Heard *In the Word*

- The Israelites disobeyed God's commands and worshipped a golden calf.
- Moses prayed for God to show mercy, and God sent a plague instead of destroying the people for their sin.

OutWord *For Family Discussion*

Suppose you hear some neighborhood kids talking, and they say that God is mean because he's always punishing people. **What could you say?**

Many people have the wrong idea of God being like a mean judge, but that's not true. The Bible teaches that God loves people, but we have to understand a few other important things about God. First, God is holy. That means he cannot sin and hates all sin. Second, God is just. That means he is always fair and must punish sin. If we stopped there, we would be in trouble because God must punish, or judge, our sin. But the Bible also tells us that God is merciful! That means he helps those in misery and withholds deserved punishment. God showed his love and mercy when he sent his Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and take our punishment for sin. When we believe in Jesus and ask God for mercy and forgiveness, he forgives us! You can read more about God and what he's like from the Bible, too!

HomeWord *For Parents*

While Moses was up on the mountain with the Lord, the Israelites grew impatient and demanded that Aaron make gods to go before them (Exodus 32:1). Aaron requested the people's gold, and he fashioned a golden calf. The people worshipped the calf as their deliverer from Egypt (Exodus 32:2-4). Aaron built an altar to the Lord and proclaimed a feast the following day, but the people used the feast to celebrate as the pagans did (Exodus 32:5-6). So soon after receiving the Ten Commandments, they disobeyed the first two!

Meanwhile, God knew what was happening in the camp and told Moses that the people had sinned. He said they must be destroyed. Moses pleaded with the Lord on behalf of the Israelites, reminding him that they were his people. Then he reminded God of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 32:11-13). This intercession by Moses showed his love for the people and his special relationship with the Lord, who answered his prayer and spared the people.

Moses and Joshua returned to the camp to find the people out of control. Moses threw the stone tablets down, and they broke. He then burned the golden calf and made the Israelites drink the powder. He confronted Aaron, asking for an explanation of what happened, but Aaron just blamed the people. Moses called for men who were willing to follow the Lord, and men from the tribe of Levi gathered to him. They went through the camp killing about 3,000 men who refused to repent (Exodus 32:15-28).

Once order was restored, Moses returned to the mountaintop to confess the people's sin, and God sent a plague as punishment (Exodus 32:30-35). This account demonstrates God's justice (he punished sin), but also his mercy (he spared the nation and kept them as his people).

