

Lesson 58

God Punishes Idolatry

The Israelites disobeyed God when they made and worshipped a golden calf.

Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Introduction

Have pictures printed and ready to show of an automobile, light bulb, and airplane.

To start today, I have some pictures to show you.

Show picture of early automobile. How many of you have heard that Henry Ford invented the automobile? Raise your hand. Show of hands.
Show picture of light bulb. How many of you have heard that Thomas Edison invented the light bulb? Show of hands.
Show picture of early airplane. How many of you have heard that the Wright brothers invented the airplane? Show of hands.

Did you know that we have sometimes given credit to the wrong inventors? For example, the first gasoline-powered automobile was created by Karl Benz in 1885, ten years before Henry Ford's self-propelled automobile was created. But we give the credit to Henry Ford.

Sir Humphry Davy actually created a powerful electric light about 75 years before Thomas Edison made his light bulb, but Edison's bulbs were better designed and became well known, so he got the credit for it.

Then, the Wright brothers are famous for their first airplane flight in 1903, but a man named Richard Pearse in New Zealand also worked on an airplane invention and may have flown his aircraft several months before the Wright brothers did.

How would you feel if you invented something like these men did, but someone else got the credit for it? Allow discussion.
Have any of you ever come up with an idea or done something that someone else took credit for? How did it make you feel? Allow discussion.

Most of us don't like it when someone else takes credit for something we said or did. Today we will see how the Israelites sinned by giving credit that belonged to God to something else.

Slide #3

Slide #4

Refer to Lessons 55 and 56 Theme Posters. Remember that God saved the Israelites from Egypt and brought them out of slavery, just as he promised he would. Then he destroyed the Egyptian army at the Red Sea. And when the people got hungry and thirsty, God provided food and water in miraculous ways.

In our last lesson, we learned about some special laws that God gave Moses to teach the people how to worship him and how to treat each

other. What are those laws called? The Ten Commandments.

Slide #5

Refer to Lesson 57 Theme Poster and the Ten Commandments Poster. The first four commandments teach how to worship God. Let's see if you remember what those are. Review the first four commands using the posters.

Now let's see if you can name the next six commands about how to treat others. Review the remaining commands from the posters.

After God spoke to the people, he commanded Moses to come up to the top of Mount Sinai, where God wrote the Ten Commandments on two stone tablets with his own finger! He also gave Moses other laws about the Sabbath day and special festivals as well as rules and punishments for when people stole from or hurt someone else.

The Israelites' Sin

Pass out the Class Notes to the students.

While Moses was receiving these important commands from God, the Israelites got tired of waiting for him to come down from the top of the mountain. Moses was gone for 40 days! The people said they didn't know what happened to Moses. Was he dead? Was he not coming back? Let's read what the Israelites did in Exodus 32.

Exodus 32:1-4

Slide #6

Slide #7

Slide #8

Encourage your students to bring their Bibles to class. If appropriate, have them read the lesson Scriptures.

Who will read Exodus 32:1? Choose a reader.

Who did the Israelites say brought them out of the land of Egypt? Moses. Was that true? Was it Moses who delivered them from Pharaoh with the ten plagues and the parting of the Red Sea? No.

It's true that Moses led the people, but it was God who rescued them with all the miracles. It's sad that the people already forgot who their real deliverer was and instead gave Moses the credit. Remember the inventors that we talked about? Some men got credit for inventions that other people made before them! Here, the people gave credit to Moses for bringing them out of slavery in Egypt.

Do you think that pleased God? No!

What else did the Israelites say to Aaron in verse 1? What did they want him to make? Make us gods who shall go before us.

They were pretty mixed up. First, they gave Moses credit for doing things only God could do, and now they wanted Aaron to make an idol to go

before them and lead them instead of God.
Do you think that pleased God? No!

Let's find out what Aaron did. Let's read verses 2–4. Assign readers.

What did Aaron ask the people to give him in verse 2? Rings of gold.

And the people did what he asked. They took off their gold rings and brought them to Aaron.

What did Aaron make with this gold? Look in verse 4. Golden calf.
What is a calf? A young cow.

Right. A calf is a young cow or bull. Many people, like the Egyptians, worshipped bulls as a symbol of power. The Israelites wanted a strong animal to worship.

In verse 4, what did the people say about the golden calf after it was made? These are your gods, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt! Let's think about what's happening here. What are the people doing? Making and worshipping an idol. Giving the idol credit for bringing them out of Egypt.

The Israelites had picked up a lot of the sinful ways of the Egyptians while they lived there. They wanted to worship God the way the Egyptians worshipped their false gods, by making an idol. This was directly against what God commanded.

Refer to the Ten Commandments Poster. Which of the Ten Commandments did they break? 1) You shall have no other gods before me; 2) You shall not make idols or bow down to them or serve them.

Wow! The Israelites already broke the first two commandments God told them to follow! They weren't worshipping God—they were worshipping a created animal. They made an idol of a golden calf and called it their god.

That was foolish of them to think that something Aaron made out of their gold rings had the power to save them from Pharaoh, but that's what they said. Just like the inventors who didn't get the credit they deserved, God wasn't getting the worship and praise for all he had done for the Israelites. Instead, the people said that this golden calf that Aaron just made brought them out of Egypt! This was a terrible sin.

Aaron tried to get the people back to worshipping God by building an altar and announcing a feast to the Lord. The next day, the people got up early and made sacrifices on the altar. But they weren't worshipping God the right way; they ate and drank and celebrated the way the false religions did. They were out of control! They were mixing worship of God with idol worship like they had learned in Egypt.

Slide #9

Let's look at our Class Notes. You will find the answers at the bottom of the page. Who will read #1 and tell us where Moses was? Assign a reader.

Sinai. Have students complete #1.

And #2? What did Aaron make with the people's gold? Assign a reader.

Golden calf. Have students complete #2.

What did the Israelites break in #3? Assign a reader. Commandments.

Have students complete #3.

Moses' Prayer

Meanwhile, up on Mount Sinai with Moses, God knew what the people were doing down below. He told Moses that they had already turned away from his commands and were worshipping a golden calf. God said the people were stubborn and rebellious and deserved to be punished for their sin. He said he would destroy the Israelites and start again with Moses. He would bless Moses and make him and his descendants into a great nation.

But Moses loved the Israelite people, so he prayed for them. This was an important prayer because God was ready to wipe them out!

Moses spoke with God and reminded him that the Israelites were his people, whom he delivered from Egypt. He said that if God destroyed them, the Egyptians would think he was evil and brought the Israelites out of Egypt just to kill them. Then Moses spoke of the promise God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel), that they would have many descendants who would live in the Promised Land. Those descendants were the same Israelites God wanted to wipe out because of their sin. Moses pleaded with the Lord to turn from his anger and not punish the people as they deserved. God listened to Moses and did not destroy the Israelites.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. What attribute of God was shown here? Merciful/mercy.

That's right. God would have been just to punish the Israelites' sin by destroying them all, but he showed mercy instead.

Slide #10

Let's go back to our Class Notes. What is the answer to #4? Assign a reader. Destroy. Have students complete #4.

And #5? What did Moses remind God about? Assign a reader. Promise. Have students complete #5.

And in #6, what attribute did God show when he didn't punish the people as they deserved? Assign a reader. Mercy. Have students complete #6.

God's Punishment

Moses' prayer saved the Israelites from death, but they were still in big trouble! Moses hurried down the mountain with the two stone tablets in his hand.

Who remembers what was written on those tablets? The Ten Commandments.

Joshua, Moses' servant, was waiting for him. When he and Moses got close to the camp, they could hear shouting. Joshua thought there was a war

going on in the camp, but Moses knew it was the people singing and feasting and worshipping the golden calf.

Slide #11

Refer to the Lesson Theme Posters. Sure enough, it was as bad as God had said. Moses saw the golden calf idol and the people dancing around—and he was furious! How could the people sin and reject the Lord after all he had done for them? Moses threw down the stone tablets and broke them. Then he burned the golden calf and ground it into powder. He sprinkled the powder in the water and made the people drink it.

Exodus 32:21–24

Slide #12

Slide #13

But the people weren't the only ones in trouble. Moses had left Aaron in charge. Listen to the conversation between Moses and his brother Aaron. Turn to Exodus 32:21–24 and follow along as I read. Read the verses.

Who did Aaron blame for the golden calf in verse 22? The people. Did Aaron take responsibility for making the calf? What did he say happened in verse 24? No. He said the people gave him their gold, he threw it into the fire, and a calf came out.

Aaron's version of the story was not the whole truth. He blamed the people and made it sound like the gold formed into a calf by itself and popped out of the fire! Ta-da! Just like that.

Slide #14

What did Aaron actually do to make the golden calf? Who can find the answer back in verse 4? He fashioned the gold with a graving tool to make the golden calf.

Now we may think that was awfully silly of Aaron to blame the people and say that the calf made itself. But most of us do the same thing Aaron did when he knew he had sinned—we blame someone else or twist the truth. Aaron didn't want to take responsibility for his sin and confess it. He had felt pressured by the people, and he gave in and made an idol like they wanted. But he had the choice to say no, so he couldn't blame the people for what he had done.

Moses went back up the mountain and confessed the people's sin to the Lord. But God said that he would still have to punish them.

Exodus 32:35

Slide #15

Who will read the punishment God sent in Exodus 32:35? Assign a reader. What did God send? A plague. And why did he send this punishment? Because they sinned by making the calf.

They were all guilty; the people wanted an idol to worship, and Aaron made one. God showed mercy by not destroying the people for their sin, but he still justly punished them with a plague.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. What attribute of God means that he is fair and must punish sin? Just.

The Israelites had learned a lot about God's faithfulness and omnipotence. He kept his promise to bring them out of slavery in Egypt by using powerful miracles. Now God had to show the Israelites that he was also just—he would punish their sin, but he was merciful to keep them as his people. He would still lead them to the land of Canaan like he promised when he made his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel).

Slide #16

Slide #17

Let's finish our Class Notes. Who will read #7 and tell us what happened when Moses came down from the mountain? Assign a reader. Stone tablets. Have students complete #7.

What did Aaron do when Moses asked him what happened? What's the answer to #8? Assign a reader. Blamed. Have students complete #8.

What did Moses do for the people in #9? Assign a reader. Confessed. Have students complete #9.

And #10, what punishment did God send for the people's sin? Assign a reader. Plague. Have students complete #10.

Application

Slide #18

Refer to the Lesson Theme Posters. The Israelites quickly turned away from the Lord while Moses was with God on Mount Sinai. They wanted an idol to worship. They broke God's commands to worship only him and to not make a carved image or bow to it.

God was ready to destroy the people because of their sin, but Moses begged God for mercy and confessed their sins to him. God listened to Moses' prayers. Because God is just, he sent a plague to punish the people, but because of his mercy, he didn't wipe them out.

Did you know that we have someone speaking for us to God the same way Moses spoke for the people? Can you guess who that is? Allow answers.

1 Timothy 2:5

Slide #19

Listen as I read from 1 Timothy 2:5. Read the verse.

Who does this verse say is the mediator between God and men? Christ Jesus.

A mediator is someone who comes between two people to settle a problem. Jesus Christ is the only one who can bring peace between God

and sinners because God is holy and we are not. Jesus gave his own life for sinners. Because of his sacrifice on the cross, we can come to God through faith in Jesus.

Just as Moses loved the Israelites and didn't want to see them destroyed, Jesus loved all of us so much that he died and rose again so we would not have to be punished forever in hell. God showed mercy to the Israelites when Moses asked. And God shows mercy to those who confess their sins and turn to Jesus, putting their trust in him to save them.

Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

Bible Baseball

Students will answer questions and run the bases!

Materials

Review Questions
Three chairs set out for bases
Optional: gift wrap tube and a large balloon

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Set out chairs as bases. Have the students line up by the home base area facing you (at the pitcher's mound). Each student up to "bat" will have a chance to answer a review question. If he can answer it correctly, let him run the bases. If he can't answer correctly, give the answer and ask him to go to the end of the line and try again.

You may want the students to sit on the chair at each base while they wait to run to the next base or have them run all the way around and return to the line. Repeat the questions until all the students have run around the bases.

For some added fun, you can use a gift wrap tube as a bat and toss a large balloon for students to hit after they answer each question.

Box Toss

Students will answer review questions then toss the beanbag at the holes in the box to gain points for their team.

Materials

Review Questions
Medium-sized cardboard box
Scissors or knife

Four beanbags
Masking tape

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use scissors or a knife to cut two or three holes in the bottom of the box. Make sure they are large enough for a beanbag to easily pass through. Label each hole with a point number: 5, 10, and 15. Use masking tape to make a tossing line several feet away from the box.

Divide the class into teams. Have the teams line up behind the line across from the box. Give each team two beanbags. Alternate asking each team a review question. Students who answer correctly will toss the beanbags at the target holes in the box to earn points for their team. If they answer incorrectly, they may toss the beanbags for fun without the points counting. Students will go to the end of the line after tossing the beanbags. Keep score for both teams. Continue play until all questions have been answered correctly and students have all had a chance to toss the beanbags.

Draw Dice

Teams will answer questions and complete a simple drawing to win. Who will finish their drawing first?

Materials

Review Questions
One drawing area for each team (paper, white board, etc.)
Pencils or white board markers
One die

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into two teams. Give each team a sheet of paper and a pencil, or divide the white board in half. Draw a mouse on the board as an example.

Ask the first team a question from the lesson. If they answer correctly, have them roll the die.

To begin drawing their mouse, each team must wait until they get a six. They will then draw the mouse's body on their paper or the board. After they have drawn the body, as they give correct answers to the questions, they can continue to draw the other parts of the mouse according to the numbers they roll.



They can draw according to the numbers below:

6 = body

5 = nose

4 = whiskers

3 = eyes

2 = ears

1 = tail

Continue giving each team a turn to answer a question and roll the die. Repeat the questions as necessary. The first team to finish their mouse wins.

You may choose to draw a simple object from the lesson, such as a crown, an open Bible, a fish, etc. Be sure to assign numbers (as above) to each part of the object to be drawn before the game begins.

Four in a Row

Students will answer questions and add a marker for their team onto the grid. Which team will be the first to get four in a row?

Materials

Review Questions

Masking tape

Red and black paper circles or other markers for each team

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a 16-section grid on the floor. The grid should be four sections wide by four sections long. Each section should be equal in size. Use eight red circles and eight black circles cut from construction paper or other markers for the two teams.

Divide the students into two teams. Give each team eight markers. They will take turns answering the questions. If they answer correctly, they can put a marker in a square on the grid. The first team to get four markers in a row wins the game.

Goofy Golf

Hit the sock with the noodle? Teams must work together to answer the questions and putt to get a hole-in-one in this crazy golf game!

Materials

- Review Questions
- Swimming noodles or rolled up newspapers
- Rolled up socks
- Masking tape
- Ten sheets of paper
- Markers

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use the markers to number sheets of paper 1–10 (use more or less depending on class size and time). Tape down the sheets of paper around the room in a random pattern to form a golf course. You may want to add chairs as obstacles in the path.

Divide the class into teams. Give each team a rolled up sock and a swimming noodle. Ask the first student a review question from the lesson. If he answers correctly, allow him to use the noodle to drive the rolled up sock toward the first sheet of paper labeled #1. Continue with the next team. Take turns allowing team members to answer questions and continue putting the socks along the course to each hole, continuing from where the last teammate left off. The sock must touch or roll over the sheet of paper to consider it in the hole. The first team to reach the tenth hole wins.

Racetrack

Who will reach the checkered flag first? Teams will race to the finish by answering review questions.

Materials

- Review Questions
- White board or chalkboard
- Markers/chalk
- Optional: paper cutouts for each team (cars, animals, circles, etc.), tape/poster putty

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Draw a racetrack on the board. It may be as simple as a straight horizontal path or a curvy circle. Label "Start" and "Finish" (with a checkered flag) at either end of the track. Add numbers along the track (e.g., 1–10) at equal intervals between Start and Finish. The numbers will be used as placement points for the racers as they progress along the track.

Divide the class into teams. You may draw a different symbol (e.g., stick figure, circle, X or O) to represent each team at the Start, or use paper cutouts as team markers and stick them to the board with tape/poster putty.

Ask the first team a review question. If they answer correctly, move their marker or redraw their symbol along the track at #1. If they answer incorrectly, give the next team a chance to answer and move to the first number. If they do not know, give the answer and ask that question again later. Continue to alternate asking review questions and moving teams' markers along the racetrack according to the numbers along the track. The first team to reach the Finish wins!

Pick a Point

Answer the questions correctly to earn the right to pick a point.

Materials

Review Questions
Small paper strips
Cup or basket

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Write various numbers in increments of 5 or 10 on strips of paper to use as point cards. Put the point cards into the cup or basket. Divide students into teams of 4–5 students each. Have each team take turns answering a review question. After each correct answer, let a member of the team draw a point card from the cup.

The number of points on the cards will vary, so the score will have nothing to do with how skilled one team might be. Keep track of each team's points. If time allows, repeat the questions!

Toss for It

How many points? Toss for it! Students answer the questions and toss the beanbag to earn points for their team.

Materials

Review Questions
A deck of numbered cards, or numbers and "wild" written on index cards

One beanbag
Masking tape
Two baskets or containers for cards

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Place several rows of numbered cards facedown with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern (make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too). Use the masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

Divide students into teams and have them line up behind the tossing line. Ask the first student a review question. If he gives the correct answer, have him toss the beanbag onto a card. Turn the card over to reveal the points he receives for his team. Face cards or word cards are 10 points each. Wild or Jokers are also 10—plus another turn. All other cards are face value.

Have the student pick up his card and put it in the team's basket to be counted at the end of the game. Next team's turn. If a student gives an incorrect answer, he should go to the end of the line. Give the answer and repeat that question later. Continue taking turns until all the questions have been answered. Add more cards to the grid if necessary.

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