

## **The Life of Moses, Part 46 - - The Golden Calf and Waiting on the Lord (Exodus 32:1-28)**

*“Now the LORD said to Moses, ‘Come up to Me on Mount Sinai and I will give you the tablets of stone upon which I have written My commandments.’” Exodus 24:12*

*“So Moses said to the elders of Israel, ‘Wait here for me until I come back. Behold, Aaron and Hur are here with you.’ As Moses went up the mountain, there was a cloud covering it. So Moses entered the cloud as he went up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.” Exodus 24:14, 15, 18*

*When Moses went to the top of Mount Sinai, he totally disappeared from sight for forty days and forty nights.*

*Moses’ long stay on Mount Sinai was a spiritual test for the Israelites.*

*“Now when the Israelites saw that Moses was so long delayed in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, ‘Make us a god who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses, who brought us out of Egypt, we don’t know what has become of him.’” Exodus 32:1*

*“But our fathers refused to obey God. Instead, they rejected Him and in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, saying to Aaron, ‘Make us a god who will go before us,’ and at that time, they made an idol in the form of a calf.” Acts 7:39*

*“Then Aaron said to them, ‘Take off the gold earrings your wives and sons and daughters are wearing and bring them to me.’ And Aaron took what they handed him and made it into a golden calf.” Exodus 32:2*

*“Then all the Israelites said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.’” Exodus 32:4*

### Commandment #1

*You shall have no other gods in place of Me.*

### Commandment #2

*You shall not make for yourself an idol, nor shall you bow down to it or worship it.*

*“The people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings to this calf. Then they sat down to eat and drink - - and then rose to play.” Exodus 32:6*

*The Hebrew word translated “play” here refers to provocative sexual behavior.*

*“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Go down at once, for your people have corrupted themselves. They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made an idol in the shape of a calf.” Exodus 32:7*

*“I have seen these people, that they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave Me alone, Moses, so that My anger may burn against them and I will destroy them. And then, I will make U into a great nation.” Exodus 32:9*

*Just as Moses’ absence was a test for Israel . . . so Israel’s sin was a test for Moses!*

*“Then Moses entreated the LORD and said, ‘Please turn from your fierce anger and change Your mind about doing them harm. Please remember Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Your servants, to whom You swore that You would make their descendants a great nation.’” Exodus 32:11-13*

*“So the LORD relented and did not bring on His people the disaster He had threatened.” Exodus 32:14*

*“Then Moses went down the mountain carrying the two tablets of stone in His hands. They were inscribed on both sides and the writing was God’s writing, engraved on the tablets.” Exodus 32:15*

*“As Moses drew near the camp and saw the calf and the reveling his anger burned and he threw the two tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain.” Exodus 32:19*

*“Then Moses took the calf and ground it to powder and put it in the water and made all the Israelites drink it.” Exodus 32:20*

*POINT: If this “god” couldn’t even save himself from annihilation, how in the world could he save Israel from harm?*

*“Then Moses said to Aaron, ‘What did these people do to you that you led them into such a great sin?’” Exodus 32:21*

*“Don’t be angry at me, my lord, for you know how prone these people are to evil. They asked me to make them a god who would go before them . . . So they gave me their gold and I threw it in the fire and out came this calf!” Exodus 32:22, 24*

*“I don’t know -- it just did!”*

*“And the LORD was angry enough at Aaron to destroy him, but I prayed for Aaron also.” Deuteronomy 9:20*

*“When Moses saw how the people were running wild and acting out of control, then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and shouted, ‘Whoever is on the LORD’S side, let them come to me.’ And all the Levites rallied to him.” Exodus 32:25*

*God always offers sinners mercy before He sends judgment.*

*“Then Moses said to the Levites, ‘Every one of you strap on your sword and go through the camp of Israel and kill even your brothers and your friends and your neighbors.’” Exodus 32:27*

*The only people slain that day were those who had first spurned God’s offer of mercy.*

*“So the Levites did as Moses commanded and that day about three thousand of the people died.” Exodus 32:28*

*So What?*

*“Why did the Israelites build the golden calf here in Exodus 32?”*

*The real issue here was their failure to “wait on the LORD.”*

*Instead of waiting on God and resting in God by faith . . .*

- They completely lost sight of God*
- They panicked*
- And they acted with fleshly impatience and impulsiveness*

*During this forty-day delay, God wanted the Israelites to:*

- Trust God by faith*

- Rest in God's promises
- Wait on God's timing in quiet confidence

When God "delays" in our lives, He is trying to teach us the very same thing He was trying to teach the Israelites

- How to "be still and know that He is God" (Psalm 46:10)
- How to "wait patiently on the LORD and not rely on the arm of the flesh" (Jeremiah 17:5)

Waiting on the Lord is a spiritual attitude that says:

#1 - "I have a great God"

#2 - "My great God is in utter control of everything"

#3 - "The timing of my great God is always perfect"

#4 - "Based on what God has done for me in the past, I can trust Him in the present"

#5 - "Therefore, I will not panic or rush out impulsively in the energy of the flesh"

"He who believes, shall not make haste." Hudson Taylor

"The night before Herod was to behead him, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound to them with chains." Acts 12:6

". . . hit Peter in the side to wake him up." Acts 12:7

"Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him." Psalm 37:7

Quietly confident:

- That God has everything under control
- That God's timing is perfect
- That He will be faithful to you in the present just like He has been faithful in the past

And quietly resolved - - not to rush out in fleshly impulsiveness and try to take matters into your own hands.

"Wait on the LORD. Be strong and let your heart take courage. Yes, wait on the LORD." Psalm 27:14

"How can I tell the difference - - between when God wants me to act and when God wants me to wait on Him?"

This is something God shows people when they are walking close to Him.