

## Week 12: The Betrayal - Exodus Ch 32

### Pre-Work

- This is a perfect time to get a summary of the second half of the Book of Exodus! Please watch this overview from the Bible Project covering Exodus 19-40.

<https://bibleproject.com/videos/exodus-19-40/>

- Please read Exodus 32 in the translation of your choice. What stands out to you in these chapters? What questions arise in your mind when you read them?

## Class Notes

- Tabernacle recap
- Meanwhile, at the Bride's house...

**32** Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled around Aaron and said to him, “Come, make us a god who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt—we do not know what happened to him.”

- Unfaithfulness on the day of the wedding...
- The first two stipulations in the marriage contract already agreed to by Israel

<sup>2</sup> Aaron said to them, “Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me.” <sup>3</sup> So all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought *them* to Aaron. <sup>4</sup> Then he took *the gold* from their hands, and fashioned it with an engraving tool and made it into a cast metal calf; and they said, “This is your god, Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.” <sup>5</sup> Now when Aaron saw *this*, he built an altar in front of it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow *shall be* a feast to the LORD.” <sup>6</sup> So the next day they got up early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and got up to engage in lewd behavior.

- The people asked for a different god; Aaron gave them an image of Yahweh
- The offering for worship becomes the thing offered worship
- The gifts of the Egyptians becomes the means by which Israel makes the promise happen in the way that seems right in their eyes
  - Genesis 12
  - Genesis 3

<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD spoke to Moses, “Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have behaved corruptly.<sup>8</sup> They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a cast metal calf, and have worshiped it and have sacrificed to it and said, ‘This is your god, Israel,

who brought you up from the land of Egypt!”<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people.<sup>10</sup> So now leave Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation.”

- “Leave Me alone ...that I may destroy them” - Is Yahweh commanding Moses not to intercede or inviting Moses to intercede?
- Offer to start over with Moses as the new Adam/Abraham
- Remember the 5 objections of Moses in Ex 3-4?
  1. Who am I?
  2. Who are you?
  3. What if they don't believe me?
  4. I can't speak
  5. Just send another/ refusal

<sup>11</sup> Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said, “LORD, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?

- Intercession 1: These people's identity is in You (who am I?)
- Intercession 2: You are the Rescuer (who are you?)

<sup>12</sup> Why should the Egyptians talk, saying, ‘With evil *motives* He brought them out, to kill them on the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth’? Turn from Your burning anger and relent of *doing* harm to Your people.

- Intercession 3: What if the Egyptians now don't believe in You? (what if the people don't believe me?)

<sup>13</sup> Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.’”

- Intercession 4: You have spoken (reminder of Gen 12:1-3)/corresponding to “I can't speak”

<sup>14</sup> So the LORD relented of the harm which He said He would do to His people.

- Yahweh “nacham” of the “ra” He said He would do
- Yahweh's immutable character
- What about intercession 5? It's a big one...and we have to wait for it...

<sup>15</sup> Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets which were written on both sides; they were written on one *side* and the other. <sup>16</sup> The tablets were God's work, and the writing was God's writing engraved on the tablets.

- Yahweh's personally hand-crafted marriage covenant

<sup>17</sup> Now when Joshua heard the sound of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "*There is a sound of war in the camp.*" <sup>18</sup> But he said,

"It is not the sound of the cry of victory,  
Nor is it the sound of the cry of defeat;  
But I hear the sound of singing."

- Joshua halfway up the mountain waiting, hears warlike sounds
- Moses' answer reaches into poetry/emotion: no this is much worse than warfare...it is Genesis 3 all over again - "*This is no mine... it's a tomb*" ~Boromir

<sup>19</sup> And it came about, as soon as Moses approached the camp, that he saw the calf and *the people* dancing; and Moses' anger burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them to pieces at the foot of the mountain.

- Moses saw injustice towards God and in his human anger shattered the handiwork of God's words

<sup>20</sup> Then he took the calf which they had made and completely burned *it* with fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered it over the surface of the water and made the sons of Israel drink *it*.

- Foreshadowing the death of many of the idolaters...the people will consume what was consuming them

<sup>21</sup> Then Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you, that you have brought *such* a great sin upon them?" <sup>22</sup> And Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of my lord burn; you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil. <sup>23</sup> For they said to me, 'Make a god for us who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt—we do not know what happened to him.' <sup>24</sup> So I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.' Then they gave *it* to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf."

- Much like Adam threw Eve under the bus
- Aaron skipped the part where he led the whole escapade

<sup>25</sup> Now when Moses saw that the people were out of control—for Aaron had let them get out of control to *the point of being* an object of ridicule among their enemies— <sup>26</sup> Moses then stood at the gate of the camp, and said, “Whoever is for the LORD, *come* to me!” And all the sons of Levi gathered together to him. <sup>27</sup> And he said to them, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel says: ‘Every man *of you* put his sword on his thigh, and go back and forth from gate to gate in the camp, and kill every man his brother, and every man his friend, and every man his neighbor.’” <sup>28</sup> So the sons of Levi did as Moses instructed, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day. <sup>29</sup> Then Moses said, “Dedicate yourselves today to the LORD—for every man has been against his son and against his brother—in order that He may bestow a blessing upon you today.”

- Is this good or bad? Did the Lord say this or did Moses SAY the Lord said it?
- Set in comparison to the breaking of the tablets (engravings of God) is the killing of 3,000 images of God
- The Levites are supposed to be intercessors for sinners...here they are acting in the role of executioners.

<sup>30</sup> And on the next day Moses said to the people, “You yourselves have committed a great sin; and now I am going up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.”

- Moses got angry and initially breaks the tablets of the commandments and orders a mass execution on the basis of claimed command/ possibly genuine command of Yahweh
- Moses now must make one last intercession, not for Yahweh, but to show the character of a true intercessor

<sup>31</sup> Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Oh, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves! <sup>32</sup> But now, if You will forgive their sin, *very well*; but if not, please wipe me out from Your book which You have written!”

- 5th intercession: I will offer myself on behalf of the guilty/total surrender - paired with total refusal in Exodus 4

<sup>33</sup> However, the LORD said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will wipe him out of My book.

- I will be just (did Moses sin against God?)

**34** But go now, lead the people where I told you. Behold, My angel shall go before you; nevertheless on the day when I punish, I will punish them for their sin.” **35** Then the LORD struck the people *with a plague*, because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made.

- The plan of dwelling with My people will continue and so will your leadership, Moses
- “My angel” will go before you
- On the day I punish, I will punish them for their sin...what day is this?
- *Isaiah 53:6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.*
- Jewish scholars have long seen the Golden Calf incident as the Fall/Fail narrative for Israel

“...the story of the golden calf has found a place in scripture as a testimony to God’s forgiveness. Israel and the church have their existence because God picked up the pieces. There was no golden period of unblemished saintliness. Rather, the people of God are from the outset the forgiven and restored community. There is a covenant – and a new covenant – because it was maintained from God’s side. If there ever was a danger of understanding Sinai as a pact between partners, the rupture of the golden calf made crystal clear that the foundation of the covenant was, above all, divine mercy and forgiveness. Finally, in between Israel and God was the mediator, who wrestled with God and stood in the breach. Alongside the figure of Moses as the great law giver, stands Moses the intercessor, who knowing the full wrath of God, shielded Israel from its full force and secured for his people the renewal of the promise.” ~*Brevard S. Childs, The Book of Exodus*

## Reflections