

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. *Enjoy discovering more about Him!*

"IT'S NOT ABOUT THE GOLDEN CALF" | EXODUS 32 | PASTOR BRIAN

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What is something silly or foolish you got pressured into?

"God's People Sinning" - (Exodus 32:1-6)

Why is mixing worship of God with other things so dangerous?

"God's Anger Fuming" - (32:7-10)

How does looking at God's wrath here in Exodus help you see Jesus as our mediator more clearly?

"Moses' Heart Interceding" - (32:11-14)

How could praying according to God's word/promise/character change the way we pray?

"God's Wrath Judging" - (32:15-35)

Jesus takes responsibility for our sin (see II Cor. 5:21). What do we need to take responsibility for and what do we need Jesus to take on for us?

REFLECTION QUESTION:

How central is the Word of God in your life and worship? How central is God in your affections?

It's not about a Golden Calf

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2-7 Lar: Baptism. Ro. Men's Brkfst. Bulgaria. REAL. Harvest Festival.
- B. Slide8 Tony: 2nd Service, Baby Dedication.
- C. Slide9 Sun Prayer: tonight 6:30pm Agape room.
- D. Slide10 The Jesus Music, *a soundtrack of a movement*. - Till Thursday.
- E. Prayer:

II. Slide11a **Intro:** *It's not about a Golden Calf*

- A. Right out of the gate, immediately on the heels of receiving God's law, the children of Israel replay the fall of humanity by *breaking the covenant almost as soon as it was inaugurated*.
- B. The 1st & 2nd commandments form a pair: *no other gods and no carved images*.
 1. The 1st deals with **whom** we worship (the true God alone). **While** the 2nd is concerned with **how** we worship (**not** in our own preferred way, **nor** by adopting the practices of surrounding, unbelieving peoples, **rather by worshipping God in the ways He has revealed**).
 2. **Idolatry** seems to be the basis for all sins, **thus** the **1st** 2 commandments.
 3. Slide11b *"God is not the God of our making or imagination, or even of our own discovery."*

III. Slide12a **GOD'S PEOPLE SINNING (1-6)** *Read 1-6*

- A. In the meantime, Moses's long absence wears on the nation.
 1. They are tired of **lockdown** and are ready to **move on** with their lives, toward the Promised Land.
- B. Two key words in Exodus 20:4 are *image* and *likeness*: **"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness."**

1. This is not the 1st time this pair appears in the Bible. This is the language of the creation of man. *Image* appears in Genesis *God made man in his own image*. And *likeness* in Genesis 1:26; 5:1-3: *When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God*.
 2. Here they made an image for themselves *instead of* embracing that they themselves were made in God's image. See, to make our own images of God for worship is to reject our calling and dignity as His imagers.
- C. They were out of Egypt, *but again*, Egypt wasn't out of them.
- D. **The problems:** Moses was gone. Lack of leadership. Impatience. Make us gods (didn't anybody pick up on this ... If you can make a God, is it a God?)
- E. **Syncretism** at its finest (merge/unite/combine). *Idolatry* + make it *a feast day* to the Lord.
1. Maybe our biggest problem today in the West is ... we Syncretize *materialism* with our *Christianity*. (#blest if I'm *healthy & wealthy*)
- F. **Bull worship** - the bull was a popular deity in Egypt, in Canaan. **But** this was *a calf*.
1. Bulls were dangerous. Calves were cute, accessible, approachable, something people would be comfortable with. They were fashioned after Aaron's own preference.
- G. (1) **Make us gods who shall go before us** - they weren't seeking a new god, they were seeking *a new representative*. So not a *replacement*, but a *visible substitute*.
- H. Israel's sin here is *improper* and *inappropriate* worship.
1. **But** the nature of their offense is *open to interpretation*. **Either** Israel was worshiping Yahweh *in the wrong way* (elohim), **or** they were worshiping *another god or gods*.
- I. **Aaron** the compromiser, allowed others to dictate *his actions* and *his theology*. **Not** a good start for the *brand new High Priest*.
1. Aaron, is perhaps the Bible's quintessential display of *sympathy-gone-wrong*, just gives in.
- J. (5) **a feast to the Lord** - let's make it a *little religious*, let's bring *Yahweh* into it.

1. Let's take something **scary** in our culture **and** make a safe way to worship the same thing, **by** assigning *a spiritual value* to it. **Or** it's called, *legitimizing the perversion*. Which is never a good way to worship *a Holy God*.

K. *Slide12b* This is not a story about *a golden calf*, it's a lesson about *the human heart*

IV. *Slide13a* **GOD'S ANGER FUMING (7-10)** *Read 7-10*

A. While *Moses* was experiencing his mountaintop experience with the Lord, *the people* were *sinning* in the valley below.

B. (9) *Stiff-necked* (1st time used) - It speaks of an animal *you cannot steer*, (Knott's Berry Farm story, burro ride in the 60's). It's an idiom based on a farm animal stiffening its neck *to refuse the yoke* (disobedience).

C. (10) *Moses* I'm gonna start over with you, *picture it in lights*, "*Moses' people*"!

D. This could have been a great temptation for *Moses*, **but** it wasn't.

1. **Wow**, being the father of a new nation (eg. the new Abraham), **but** he love the people, **and** prayed for their forgiveness.

E. *Moses* plays the role as **mediator** in perfect fashion.

1. **Yet Jesus** was a better mediator than *Moses*, **as** *Moses* couldn't bring them into the promised land, *Joshua* did.

F. *Slide13b* This is not a story about *a golden calf*, it's a lesson about *God's Holiness!*

V. *Slide14a* **MOSES' HEART INTERCEDING (11-14)** *Read 11-14*

A. *Gods* not all over the place. He's testing and leading *Moses* to *remember* His covenant promises that He will not break.

B. *Moses* prayer: short and strong.

1. *Moses* doesn't focus on *the children of Israel's errors*, he focuses in on *the character of God*. He saying, *Lord, it's not about the people, it's about You*.

C. *Slide14b* *Moses* prays through **3 reasons** why God should hear him:

1. **Your Victory** (11) - in our day it's claiming the cross. *Jesus, this is the victory you wrought on the cross.*
2. **Your Name** (12) - Your reputation will be ruined.
3. **Your Covenant** (13) - remember the covenant to *Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob*
 - a) Remember when God first asked Moses to work for him? He argued with God for selfish reasons try to get out of it. *Look at him now!*
4. **This reminds us today ...** We can be praying through the lens of **the cross**. We can be praying through the lens of **God's reputation**. We can be praying through the lens of **the promises He's made to His people**.
 - a) Remind God of His promises **and** seek to magnify His glory.
 - b) Prayer should be meditating on **God's character**. Praying His Word back to Him. *Will this truth or reminder change your prayer life at all?*

D. **Slide14c The Lord relented.** Numbers 23:19 *God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?*

1. God will change His course of action, *especially because of the prayers or mediation of another.*
2. **How do we reconcile:** *I will bring my wrath - No I won't.* God is described in human terms (anthropomorphism).
 - a) God is *not inflexible*, but He *sovereignly responds* to the individual **needs and attitudes and actions** of His people. And here He would *not change* on how He relates to Moses, *His Mediator* (that was primary).
3. **Slide14d The Bible gives 3 major areas where God will change:**
 - a) When people **intercede**. When people **repent**. Or when **His compassionate heart overwhelms Him**. Think of this when you cry out to him in prayer.

E. **Slide14e** This is not a story about *a golden calf*, it's a lesson about **prayer!**

VI. **Slide15a GOD'S WRATH JUDGING (15-35) Read 15-35**

- A. (15) **Joshua** - Let someone **pour** into you, **and** then you **download** into someone else.
1. *But I've only been a Christian 10 days.* OK, then find somebody that's been a Christian 1 day. :) [i.e. Moses/Joshua relationship]
- B. (19) Breaking the tablets, is the same as *tearing up a contract*. They broke the contract with God.
- C. (20) **Drinking the water**, in that sense, taking the gold into your body, and then expelling it out of your body, which is *what their lil gold god was worth*.
- D. (21-24) **Aaron really showed himself as a weak leader**. From the beginning they were trying to replace *Moses their mediator*, **but** Aaron wasn't even in the running.
- E. Proving his **lack of leadership** once again, he can't even own his part. Aaron goes for *the oldest trick in the book* (literally, from Adam). Aaron plays **the blame game**.
 (22, *you know the people / that they are set on evil*. 23, *they said, make us gods*. 24, *They gave it to me, I through it in the fire & poof out came this calf*.)
1. Aaron was like the child who **spilled his milk**, **but** exclaimed, **"It spilled"?**
 2. The core of the famous basketball coach, **John Wooden's philosophy** started with his father's rules. **Joshua Wooden** gave his boys **2 Sets of 3** rules, he hoped would guide their *everyday behavior*.
 - a) **Slide15b** The 1st set dealt with **integrity**: *Never lie. Never cheat. Never steal.*
 - b) The 2nd set of 3 dealt with **how to handle adversity**: *Don't whine. Don't complain. Don't make excuses.* [if only *Aaron* would have taken this advice]
- F. **Slide15c** This is not a story about **a golden calf**, it's a lesson about **Leadership!**
- G. (28) **3000 people dead**. Why? Well, what is the wages of sin? ... **Death**.
1. God in His grace forgives the sinner, **but** in His government He must punish the sin. **Because sin** is being *even slightly off perfection*. **But remember Jesus' death** (and that was with perfection).
 2. If you get diagnosed with **a fatal disease**, you take it **seriously**.
 3. The most serious disease that human kind has is ... the disease of **sin**.
- H. **Augustine defined sin** as *disordered love*. **Sin** has everything to do with **love**.

1. God created us to *worship Him* as an end in Himself, **and** He designed us to love people in a way that would magnify *His goodness and greatness*.
 2. And this would create the deepest happiness in our souls. **But sin entered our hearts, and those loves became reversed.**
 - a) *We now love the world and ourselves as an end, **and** we view God as a means to that end. *ouch!*
 3. This story forces us to ask, again and again, *How central is the Word of God in my life and in our worship?*
- I. *Slide15d* This is not a story about *a golden calf*, it's a lesson about *Corporate Responsibility!*
- J. (32) blot me out of Your book - Take me for them. Which was Paul's heart ...
1. Rom.9:3-5 *For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.*
- K. (30) perhaps I can make **atonement** for your sin - *Someone must atone for everyone else, but* Moses couldn't be that person. This is a very *gospel preparatory* passage. Moses won't be able to **but He's sending One who will** (Jesus).
- L. *Slide15e* This is not a story about *a golden calf*, it's a lesson about *Atonement!*
- M. This is not a story about *a golden calf*, It's a lesson about *the Human Heart*. It's a lesson about *God's Holiness*. It's a lesson about *Prayer*. It's a lesson about *Leadership*. It's a lesson about *Corporate Responsibility*. It's a lesson about *Atonement!*
- N. Keywords: Covenant, Cross, fear, forgiveness, glory, God, gospel, grace, heart, holiness, Jesus, mercy, prayer, promises, religious, remembering, sin, worship.