

Exodus 32

1. How good are you at waiting?

What do you think would happen to most people if authority figures were removed?

2. How long has it been since the Israelites left Egypt?

Since that time, what demonstrations of God's power did they personally witness?

How long had Moses been on the mountain?

What was going on in the Israelite camp while Moses was on the mountain?

According to verse 1, what did the Israelites do when Moses did not return?

What do they think had happened to Moses?

How do you explain this seemingly sudden shift in their allegiance to God?

3. Look carefully at verse 1 again. Whom did the people approach about making them new gods?

What characterizes the gods they want to make?

God told the Israelites that He would go before them as a pillar of fire at night and a cloud by day. Why do you think they wanted to substitute a god they had to carry for God Who went with them?

After personally witnessing all that God had done, why do you think Aaron listened to the people?

What excuse did the people use to convince Aaron to take the place of his brother Moses?

How can we guard ourselves against peer pressure?

4. What is Aaron's response in verse 2?

Some early scholars argue that Aaron did not willingly agree to the people's demands. They state that his asking for jewelry was an attempt to make them think he was on their side. How do you feel about this explanation?

Ironically, where did the people get the golden jewelry that they were going to use to make a god?

Do people today take God's gifts and misuse them? Please explain.

5. How did the people respond when Aaron asked for their gold?

What did Aaron do with all of the gold?

How long do you think this process took?

Since this was not a quick endeavor, Aaron had plenty of time to think about what he was doing. What do you think he was thinking all that time?

What do you believe he was thinking about his brother Moses?

What shape did they make the idol?

Why do you think they made it in the shape of a calf?

Notice the people cried that this god was the one who brought them up out of Egypt. What can we learn from this statement?

At the same time they are making this calf, God is meeting with Moses, giving him the law. One of God's commandments was they were not to make any graven image. Yet, God does not stop them. Why? What does this tell us about God?

What do the people declare once the calf was made?

According to this statement, do you think the people made a new god or a representation of God?

Do people do the same thing today? Do they make substitutes for God that they can carry around? Please explain.

6. Aaron is not finished. In verse 5, what does he do once the calf is complete?

Notice the word Aaron uses for LORD is YHWH, which is God's name. What does this tell us about Aaron?

How do you think Aaron could believe that the calf and God were the same?

How do the people respond to Aaron's instructions?

Notice, the sacrifices they offer to the calf are the same ones they were to offer to God. Read Isaiah 6:3 and Isaiah 42:8. How do they relate to this event?

Verse 6 says the people ate, drank, and indulged in revelry. What do you think this means?

The word used for revelry also means play. The Hebrew definition says it is a verb that means to laugh or to mock. It may also have sexual overtones. So, how are the people "worshipping" their god?

7. Finally, God tells Moses what is going on. What specifically does God say to Moses in verse 7?

When dealing with Pharaoh, God called the Israelites "my people." Now, He calls them Moses' people. Why the change?

Does this mean that God will disown us if we disobey Him?

If you were Moses, how would you feel when God said, "Your people have become corrupt?"

What else does God say about the people in verse 8?

God is not finished. What does He say to Moses in verse 9?

What does it mean to you to be stiff-necked?

What does God say in verse 10?

What does it mean to you that God wanted to be left alone?

What did God plan to do with the Israelites?

Do you think God still gets this angry? Please explain.

If so, what do you think it would take today for God's anger to burn against us?

8. Imagine you are Moses. God has used to free these people. They have witnessed God's power and deliverance. God has defeated their enemies. He is taking them to the Promised Land. He has given them His laws. And now look at what they are doing. How might you react if you were Moses?

If God told you to leave Him alone, would you? Please explain.

Moses does not leave God alone. Did he disobey God?

What did Moses do when God said He was going to destroy them?

In what way has Israel become Moses' people?

What does Moses argue to God in verses 11-12?

Of what does Moses remind God in verse 13?

What is the benefit, if any, of reminding God of His promises?

As a result of Moses' intercession, what does God decide to do?

Verse 14 says, in some versions, that God repented and did not destroy Israel. How do you react to the word "repented"?

What does God decide to do as a result of Moses' intercession?

9. According to verse 15, Moses is carrying two tablets. What does it say about these two tablets?

Does your Bible say anything about why Moses was carrying two tablets?

What does verse 16 tell us about these tablets?

How do you react to the fact that you can read the words written by God's own hand?

10. Where has Joshua been all this time?

We know that God sustained Moses during these 40 days. Where did Joshua get food and water all this time?

What can we learn about Joshua from his waiting for Moses all this time?

What would have been the hardest part for you had you been Joshua?

How does Joshua interpret the noise coming from the camp?

What does Moses say to Moses?

Why do you think Moses does tell Joshua what God had said about the people?

Why are the people singing?

If it had not been for Moses' intercession, the people would have been destroyed. Yet, they are singing. What does this tell us about them?

Do you see similarities between the way people act today? Please explain.

11. God told Moses the people were rebelling. Yet, Moses was still not prepared for the sight that awaited him. What did Moses see as he approached the Israelite camp?

Verse 19 contains the same phrase as verse 10. What phrase is repeated?

Do you find yourself getting angry, really angry, at the behavior of people today? Please explain.

What did Moses do in his anger?

Do you think Moses' breaking the tablets was a rash act or was it a deliberate act? Please explain.

What did Moses do with the golden calf?

Read Deu. 9:21. How long do you think it took Moses to turn that calf into powder?

Why do you think the people did not stop him?

Had you been in that crowd, dancing before the calf, how might you have felt when you saw Moses approaching the camp after 40 days?

12. Now comes one of the more interesting exchanges in the Bible. Why does Moses question Aaron and not one of the other elders?

What does Moses ask his brother Aaron?

Look carefully at Aaron's answer. Whom does Aaron blame?

What is ironic about Aaron's answer in verse 22?

Aaron continues his explanation. According to Aaron, what happened?

Look at the last part of verse 24. What is your reaction to Aaron's answer?

Can you think of a time when you tried to explain your actions to God? Were your explanations any more sensible?

What can we learn about Aaron from this exchange?

Do you wonder why God chose Aaron to be the first High Priest? What does this tell us about God?

13. What does verse 25 tell us about the people?

Where do you think the Israelites learned this behavior?

Do you see any of the world's ways infiltrating the church today? Please explain.

According to verse 25, whom does Moses hold responsible for the people's rebellion?

From this picture, what can we learn about the importance of having Godly leaders?

After Pharaoh's army was destroyed in the Red Sea, how did Israel's enemies view Israel?

Now, as Israel dances around the golden calf, how do the enemies view Israel?

14. This time for action has come. What does Moses say to the people in verse 26?

Why do you think all the Levites came to Moses?

What can we assume about the tribe of Levi from their actions?

What does Moses command the Levites to do?

How many people were killed that day?

Who do you think were among the 3,000 killed?

What does Moses proclaim in verse 29?

How do you react to this praise heaped on the Levites after they killed 3,000 brothers, friends, and neighbors?

15. The next day Moses addresses the people. What do you think the people were thinking during the Levites retribution? What do you think camp was like that night as 3,000 lay dead around the camp?

What does Moses say to the people?

Why would Moses want to intercede for such a rebellious people?

Moses goes back up the mountain to speak with God. Who is in charge in the camp?

This episode gives us an excellent example of the gift of intercession. What do you think is the greatest characteristic of this gift?

Can you remember a time when you interceded for a person or a group? What were you feeling at the time? What motivated you?

Moses makes an amazing statement in verse 32. What does Moses tell God?

About what book is Moses speaking? (Look at Psalm 69:28 and Daniel 12:1)

Do you think Moses is serious? Please explain.

16. How does God respond to Moses' request?

Read Ezekiel 18:4 & 20. How do these verses help explain God's answer to Moses?

How do these verses apply to us today?

What does God tell Moses to do in verse 34?

What does it mean to you that God will punish when the time for punishment comes?

Verse 35 adds one more important piece of information. What happens next to the people of Israel?

Had you been in that camp, what would have caused you more fear, the Levites going through camp with swords or a plague sent by God? Please explain.

17. This chapter is probably one of the most studied. What have you learned from this chapter?

What lessons does it hold for our nation?

What does it reveal about God?

Do you see any parallels between ancient Israel in this chapter and our nation today? Please explain.