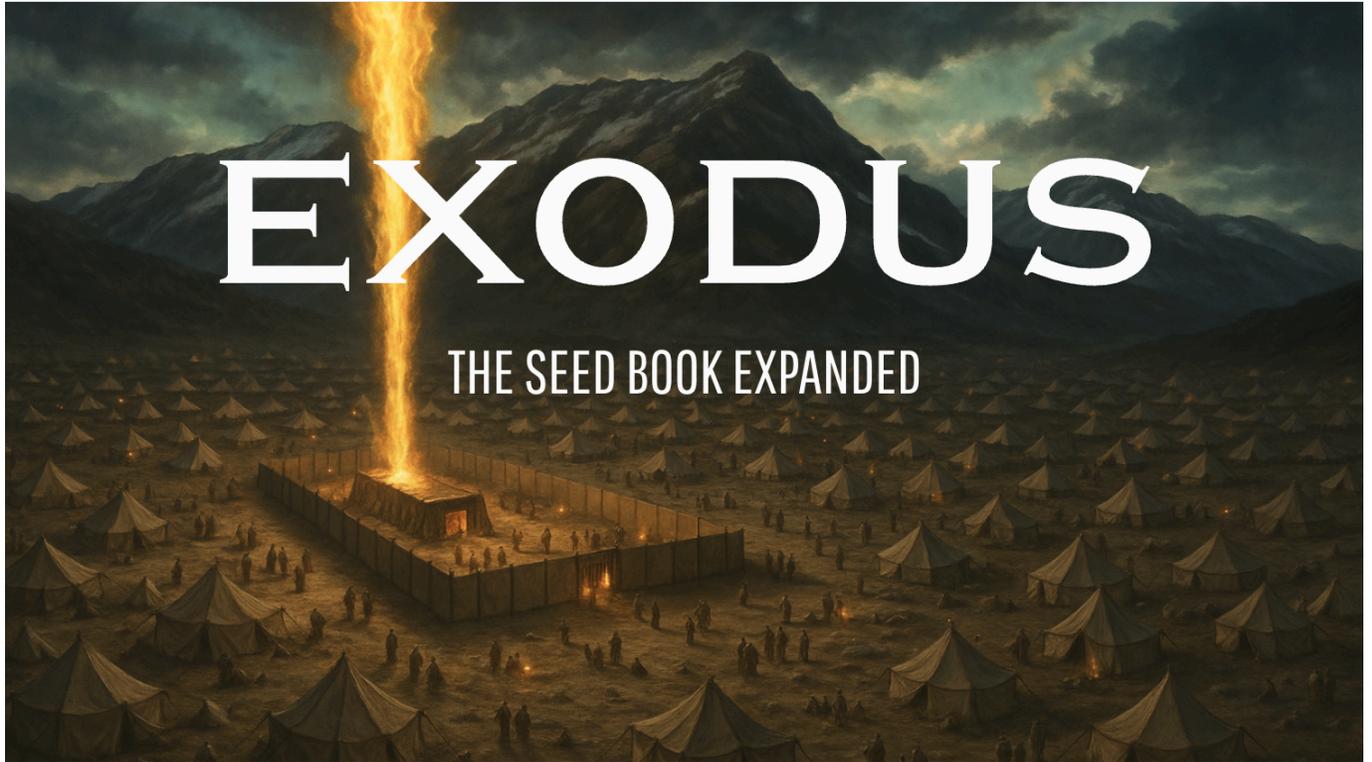


Exodus 32 (TAC)

Sunday, September 21, 2025

2:49 PM



Good Evening Arising Church!

The chapter before us presents one of the most well-known stories not only in the Judeo-Christian world but also globally. The phrase "Golden-Calf" and the imagery of Moses carrying down the tablets have both become cultural icons.



While it may be encouraging that stories from Israel's history are prolific and well known, the downside is that most every depiction is not only incomplete, but usually is missing the entire point of the story and forgoes the proper perspective that the Jewish people have had since the event took place.

In our exposition tonight, we hope to view this crucial chapter with proper perspective. We encourage everyone listening, now or in the future, to try your best to listen and read as though this were your first time, and remove pop culture and pre-conceived notions from your thoughts and conclusions.

To begin to understand this chapter, we need to turn the pages backwards into Genesis, the seed book, and see what details, stories, and interactions have been leading us to this moment.

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- o **Genesis 1:26–27 (ESV)**

- ²⁶Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

From the first chapter, we learn an essential detail about mankind as it relates to its divine creator. Adonai is speaking, and the syntax and plain language of verse 26 indicate that he is speaking to someone.

(DO NOT READ)

Genesis 1:26–27 (ESV)

26 Then God said, “**Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.** And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Adonai says, “*let us make*”, it would stand to reason then that there are other parties involved in this creative process that he is discussing the details with. Not only that, but it even says, “*in our image, after our likeness.*”

Adonai is speaking with a group, and it seems as though they are going to make man in their image. Mankind is not merely going to be in the likeness of God, but in the likeness of the group Adonai is speaking with.

An honest first-time reader would carry this understanding into the rest of the story. Mankind is in the likeness of a group of beings of which Adonai is the paramount voice. If you have been at a One Association ministry for any length of time, the following passage should be familiar to you.

Adonai is speaking with a group, and from this verse it seems as though mankind is not merely going to be in the likeness of God, but in the likeness of the group Adonai is speaking with.

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- o **Psalm 82:1 (ESV)**

¹ God has taken his place in the divine council;
in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:

This latter work from Asaph confirms the Heavenly structure Adonai sits in. He is in a divine council amidst other gods, but *He himself* holds judgment within that group. You could garner this understanding in some form from Genesis 1 alone, but Psalm 82 puts it in plain description. Additionally, other interactions between God and man in Genesis further this understanding.

(READ SLIDE)

Genesis 11:5–7 (ESV)

5 And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. 6 And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. 7 Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech."

In the generations following the flood, mankind is building a tower to heaven and a name for themselves. Adonai does not like this, so it says he "came down to see". That, in and of itself, is fascinating. When His creation is up to something that is not pleasing to Him, he does not act immediately. Instead, He again has a conversation with someone, and even presents a solution. Adonai says, "Let us go down." Adonai presents a solution to this council, and even desires that they participate in this judgment on the earth. It was apparent that this was going to happen, and we do not hear any alternative ideas, but it is fascinating that it

seems as though Adonai went down to see what was happening, then returned to His council, and then charged them all to participate in His will.

Considering that this is only 11 chapters into the Tanakh and God is having a conversation with His council numerous times before Abraham even enters the story should reveal something about our perspective when we read the other 65 works in the combined library we call the Bible.

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Let's take one more example from Genesis.

(READ SLIDE)

Genesis 18:1-2 (ESV)

And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth

Genesis 18:16-18 (ESV)

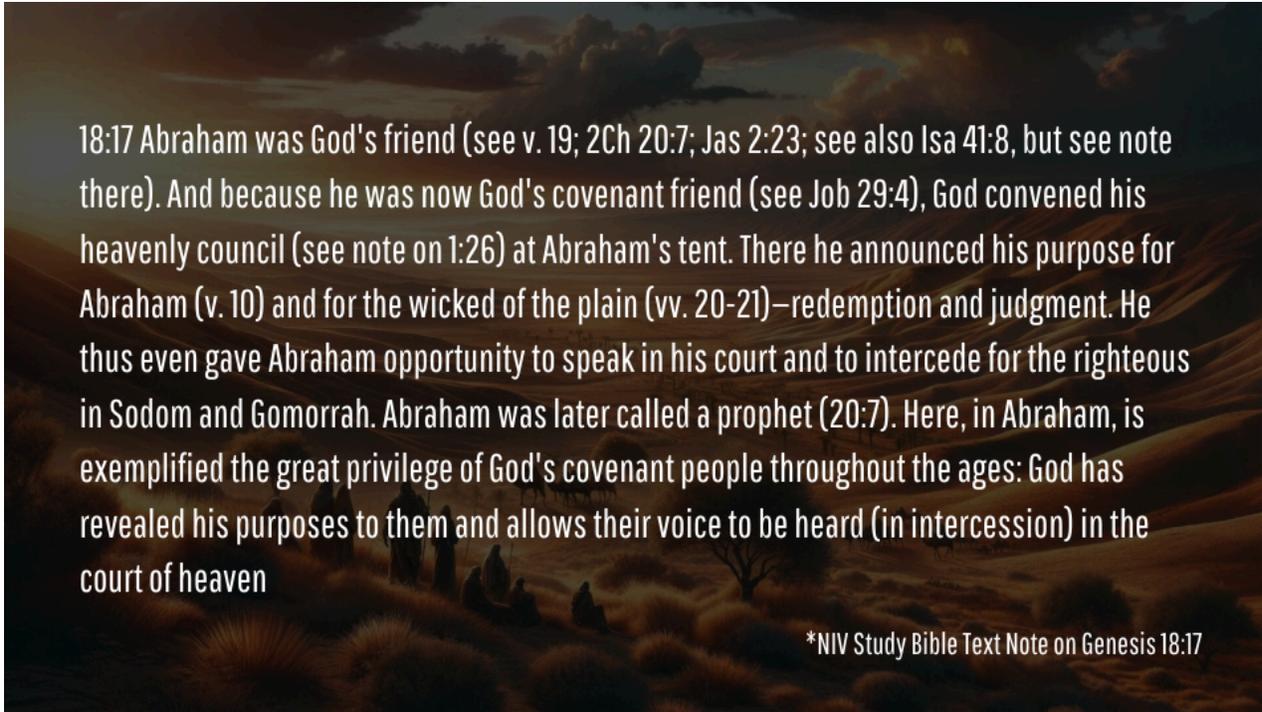
¹⁶ Then the men set out from there, and they looked down toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to set them on their way. ¹⁷ The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do," ¹⁸ seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

Chapter 18 in Genesis is where things really begin to get interesting. It says the Lord is appearing to him but its represented by three men. Additionally, it says the Lord speaks to the others and asks about including Abraham into what they are doing.

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Look at this footnote we showed you in our Genesis Foundations from the NIV 84 Study Bible on this verse.

(READ SLIDE)



18:17 Abraham was God's friend (see v. 19; 2Ch 20:7; Jas 2:23; see also Isa 41:8, but see note there). And because he was now God's covenant friend (see Job 29:4), God convened his heavenly council (see note on 1:26) at Abraham's tent. There he announced his purpose for Abraham (v. 10) and for the wicked of the plain (vv. 20-21)—redemption and judgment. He thus even gave Abraham opportunity to speak in his court and to intercede for the righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham was later called a prophet (20:7). Here, in Abraham, is exemplified the great privilege of God's covenant people throughout the ages: God has revealed his purposes to them and allows their voice to be heard (in intercession) in the court of heaven

*NIV Study Bible Text Note on Genesis 18:17

Genesis 18 shows us something extraordinary. This council we have seen in Genesis is bringing in a man, someone who is made in their likeness, to join in on rendering judgments. Abraham also jumps into this role quickly by making requests for them to consider the number of people who could be found righteous to ward off judgment.

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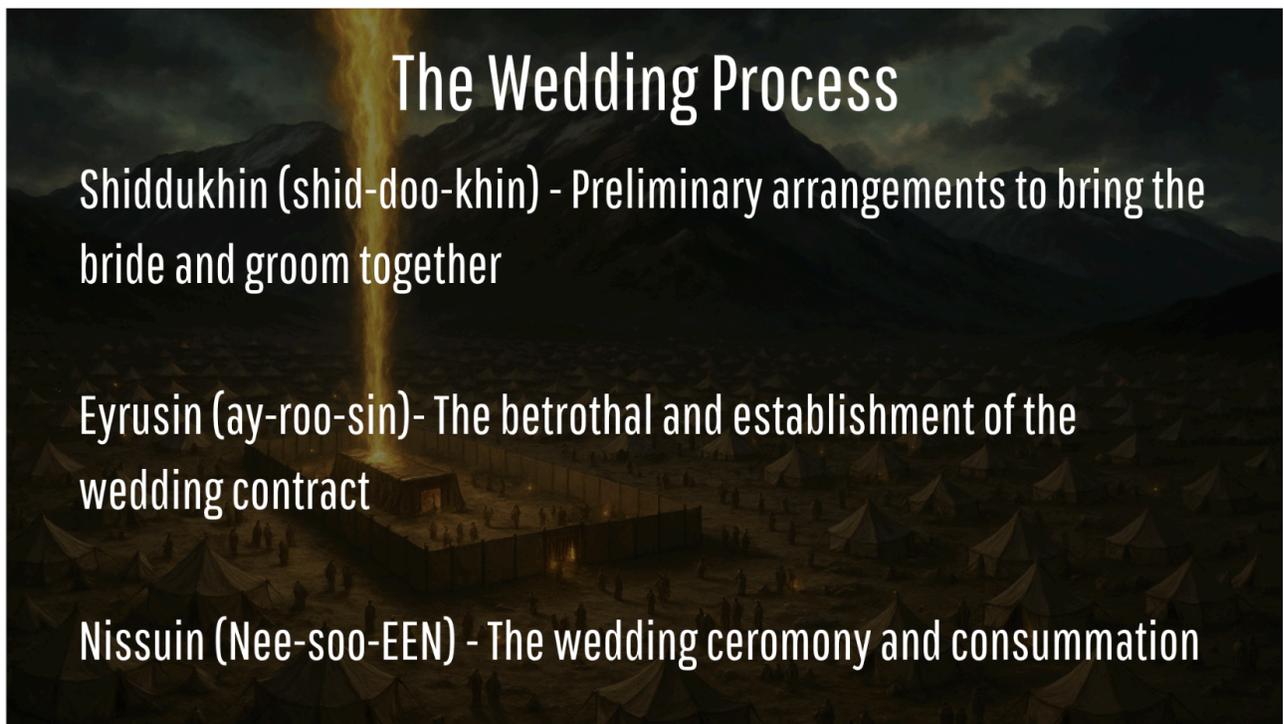
What Genesis should have taught us is that the Almighty God, who is creator and perfect judge, sits amidst other gods and men to enact His will on the earth.

This brings us to Exodus 32. Before we begin, it is also important to recall where we are in the story. Adonai has given Moses and the entire nation the 10 Commandments.

(DO NOT READ)



These commands act as a חֹפָה (chopa), for the other 603 commands that would follow. We also equated these commands with a wedding betrothal in Exodus 20.



You should be familiar with the term Ketubah, which is part of the Eyrusin stage of the wedding process. In Jewish tradition, this stage is seen as beginning in Exodus 6, where the groom's intentions are presented to the bride, and she has the choice to accept or reject his proposal. The Ketubah is what will bind the couple together; its acceptance and safekeeping in perpetuity are essential to the validity and success of the marriage.

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It was here that Adonai laid out the entire eschatological plan before Israel, which culminates in the sevenfold promise to bring Israel into dwelling with God in the promised land. We recently related this to the sevenfold pattern of millennia's that began in Genesis and is expounded upon in great detail in places like Hebrews.



All of Israel has already been told these 10 commands from Adonai, and they are aimed at preserving life in the Nation and forecasting a future rest for their people, represented by the 7th day, or Millennial Reign. As incredible as all of that is, there has been so much more revelation since chapter 20.



Moses has been receiving revelation about the Tabernacle and the Priesthood over the last 7 chapters. This nation is going to build a dwelling place for God on the earth. This nation will have a representative family to operate within this structure and ensure that the people of God are in right order with God and can make proper decisions according to His will. Aaron will be the High Priest, and his sons will assist him. Moses knows all this, but do you know who doesn't—Aaron. Aaron has not seen what Moses has. Although Moses was instructed to inscribe the words "Holy to the Lord" on Aaron's forehead, it has not yet happened. The structure is not standing, the altar is not built, and the garments have not been constructed. But this is certainly their future because Adonai spoke it.

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o **Isaiah 46:8-10 (NIV)**

8 "Remember this, fix it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels.

9 Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other;

I am God, and there is none like me.

10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come.

I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

God has made known the end from the beginning. Despite whatever happens in Israel's near or distant future, this is their destiny, this is who they were chosen to be—God's dwelling on the earth. And not only that, but they were given Laws from heaven to preserve their lives and help them bear the likeness of the one who chose them.

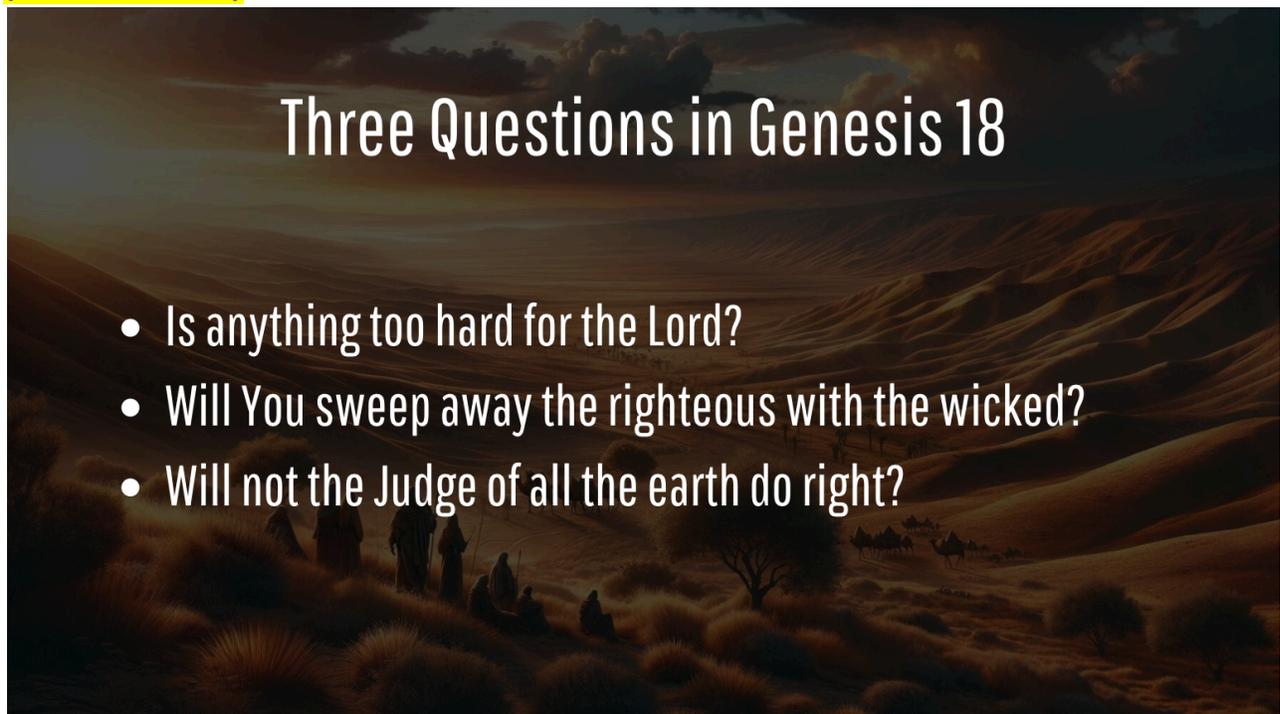
o **Isaiah 41:4 (NIV)**

4 Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord — with the first of them and with the last — I am he."

We see in Isaiah 41, the He is the only one who can always carry out His plan. The LORD makes the statement about Himself—He calls forth the generations. What you see throughout the entirety of the Bible is that the extreme depravity of man never makes Adonai unable to bring about his purpose in any generation. In light of this incredible truth, consider one last slide from Genesis.

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(DO NOT READ)



Difficult circumstances often prompt men to ask these questions. Trial, gross sin, affliction, and judgment are especially good at shaking a man to his core and bringing to the surface these questions.

Is anything too hard for the Lord?

- o **Jeremiah 32:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ 'Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.

Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?

- o **2 Peter 2:7–9 (ESV)**

⁷ and if he rescued righteous Lot... ⁹ then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,

Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?

- o **Deuteronomy 32:4 (NIV)**

⁴ He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

Tonight, these questions could be asked again, and we shall discover together what His answer will be.

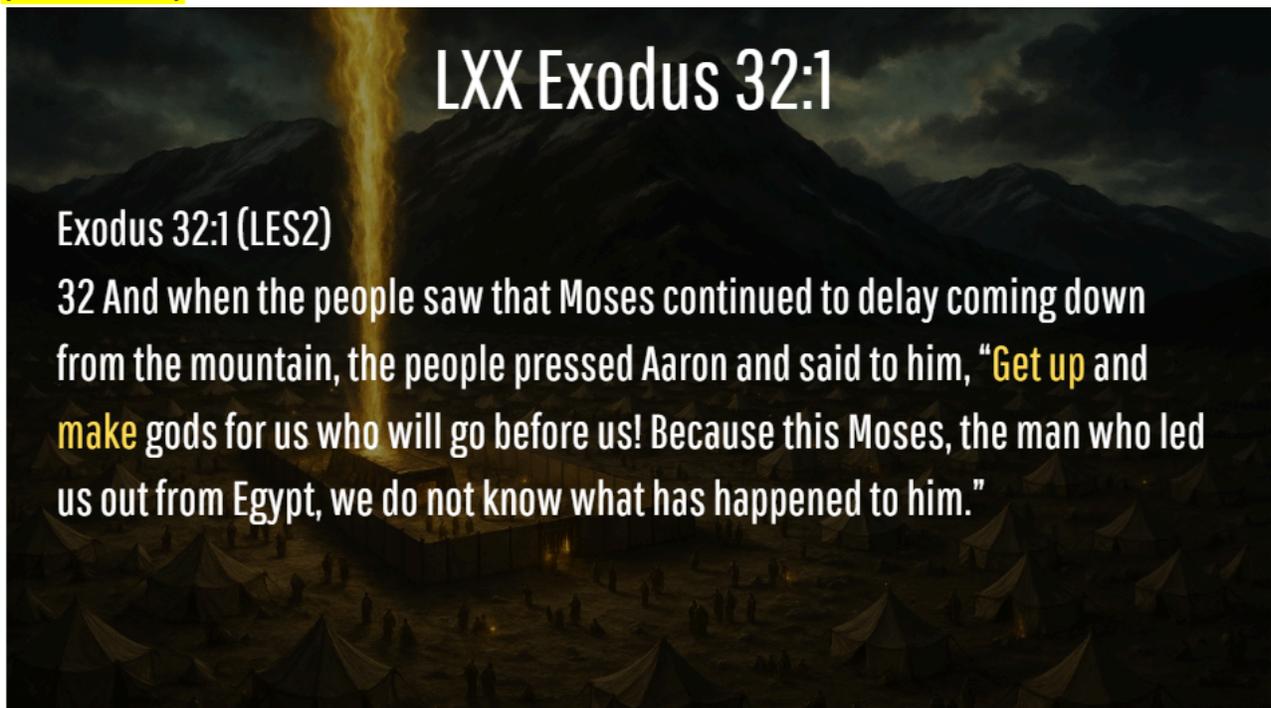
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Pray & Read Text

1 When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered round Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him."

To begin, we first have to acknowledge that the NIV fails to convey the tone the Israelites use toward Aaron. When we hear the phrase, "Come, make us gods", we tend to hear this as a suggestion or an invitation when, in fact, the original language is much more direct and commanding. The Hebrew word being used is "Qum," which means to rise up or get up, and this verb is being spoken to Aaron in the imperative. This would mean that the people are commanding Aaron instead of asking him. Let's see how the Greek LXX translates this phrase.

(Read Slide)



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They are commanding Aaron to do what they want him to do, and remember this is not long after seeing the greatest supernatural deliverance that the world has ever seen. Another thing that you might not notice in the NIV translation is the way that they are intentionally being disrespectful towards Moses. The NIV uses the phrase, "This Moses," which is a dynamic rendering through and through. Take a look at this next slide.

(Read Slide)

DISRESPECT OF MOSES

As for this Moses is meant to be disrespectful. Since Moses was still on the mountain, it may be better to say “for that Moses” (NJB) or “for that man Moses” (TAN), combining it with the following phrase. The word “that” also conveys disrespect in English. The man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt is literally “the man who caused us to ascend from the land of Egypt.” This may imply that the people were now at a higher elevation than they were in Egypt. 32:1 TEV simply has “who led us out of Egypt.” (See the comment on the similar expression at 3:8.) We do not know what has become of him is literally “we do not know what is to him.” This also means “we do not know what has happened to him.” Another way to express the final part of this verse is **“That person (or, man) Moses brought us out of Egypt, but nobody knows what has happened to him**

Osborn, N. D., & Hatton, H. A. (1999). A handbook on Exodus (p. 750). United Bible Societies.

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We are going to see the rapid decline of the situation as the Israelites plummet into total sin in this chapter. It is interesting to see that this started with people commanding the leaders to do what they wanted and mocking them while they did it.

A few more thoughts before we get to verse 2. We are going to see Aaron give in to their demands in the next verse. To be completely honest, we are not sure why Aaron acquiesces to their demands, but from a nouthetic counseling perspective, the "why" is irrelevant. There seems to have been mounting pressure on Aaron, but that does not make him guiltless.

With that in mind, you should be aware that the number 40 in the Bible is the number of testing. This is very important to consider because Moses has been on the mountain for 40 days. Since his absence is a part of these 40 days of testing, we can glean valuable insights about the sinful nature and what happens in the absence of accountability.

2 Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold ear-rings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” 3 So all the people took off their ear-rings and brought them to Aaron.

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The Hebrew word translated as "take-off" is H6561, "Parag". This word is used many times in the Tanakh and mostly means to break off, tear off, or roughly remove, and it can even refer to the breaking of a yoke.

This is quite striking, considering that they received the earrings as plunder from the victory God gave them. They were slaves, and then Adonai rescued them and even caused them to plunder their enemy, and now they are tearing off the spoils and about to make Idols with them.

What makes this even more devastating is that the Hebrew word for "ear" often means a "listening ear". Take a look at this next verse.

- o **Proverbs 25:12 (NIVUK84)**

- 12 Like an ear-ring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear.

Proverbs says that a rebuke to a "listening ear" is like an earring of gold. This passage forms a strong picture of what is happening in Exodus. The Israelites are tearing the gifts of God off themselves while closing their ears to any possible rebuke.

At this point, you should remember the reason that the Israelites were freed from Egypt in the first place. In the book of Exodus, the phrase "Let my people go so that they may worship me" is repeated 7 times... The reason that they left was to worship Adonai, and now, only a short time later, they have forgotten their purpose because they have closed their listening ears, torn off the gifts of God, and are going to give them to idols.

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We want to remind you of Genesis 35:2-4 because, as Moses is writing Exodus 32, he decides to use some very precise language when speaking to the nation of Israel that is intended to call this event back to mind. Moses specifies that Jacob's household, at the instruction of their father and leader, got rid of their earrings. The earrings of Israelites, idolatry, and purification are, in fact, connected themes that repeat in the Torah.

- o **Genesis 35:2–4 (ESV)**

2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments. 3 Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.” 4 So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

Do you see the parallel being drawn? Hundreds of years earlier, their father's household gave up their earrings to remove idolatry from among them, then, **while at the base of the mountain, they used their earrings to create idolatry.** It is not hard to imagine being the original audience—feeling the sting of this story, reflecting on getting to see the blessing of removing idolatry that came upon your forefathers, and then reversing this generations later.

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As bad as this is for the Israelites in our chapter tonight, you should be aware that later in the book of Exodus, God will take the messed-up parts of this story and put them together in a way that glorifies him.

- o **Exodus 35:20–22 (NIVUK84)**

20 Then the whole Israelite community withdrew from Moses’ presence, 21 and everyone who was willing and whose heart moved him came and brought an offering to the LORD for the work on the Tent of Meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred garments.

22 All who were willing, men and women alike, came and brought gold jewelry of all kinds: brooches, ear-rings, rings and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the LORD.

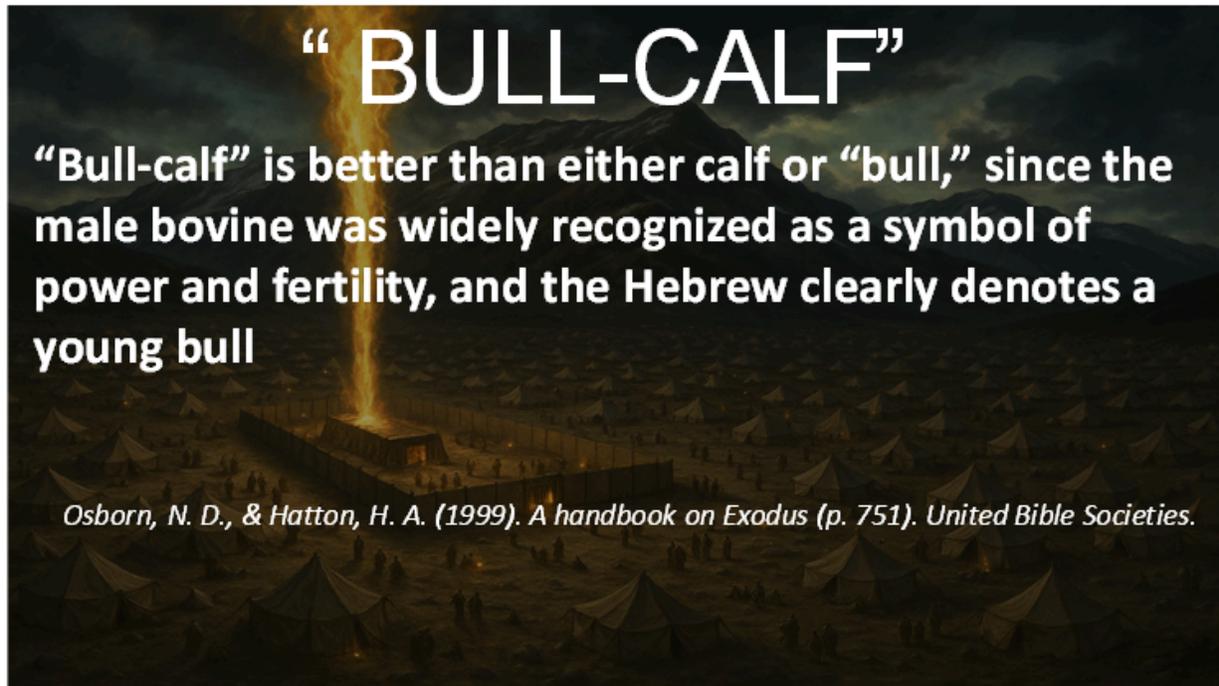
At the end of this ordeal, the Israelites will be back in a place where they will be giving their Gold to the Lord to build his house instead of giving their gold to idols.

4 He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.” 5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the LORD.”

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Again, we have to pick on the NIV translation for the word "calf" because the Hebrew word is actually the word for a bull. This is important because a calf is a young animal, and a bull is a masculine adult. For further insight into this matter, take a look at this commentary.

(Read Slide)



Clearly, the idol that the Israelites made represented a bull instead of a calf. The reason we are taking the time to show this to you is because of what the Israelites called this bull...

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If you noticed, in verse 5, Aaron says that there will be a feast to the LORD. This Hebrew word for "Lord" is not Adonai; it is YHWH. Aaron and the Idolators with him are saying that this bull is Yahweh and this bull is the God who brought them out of Egypt. There really could not be a worse way to start a downfall into the pit of depravity than this: calling something Yahweh when it clearly is not. Here, the Israelites are breaking the 1st command and the 2nd command, which is to not have any other gods besides YHWH and to not make any graven image. We have seen that Christians who fall away do the same thing, and this usually starts with the repeating pattern of committing to an action on Sunday and then failing to follow through in the rest of the week.

This is the essence of taking the Name of YHWH in vain (Exodus 20:7). It is not merely careless speech; it is attaching His holy Name to what is empty, false, or self-generated. To call something Yahweh that is not Yahweh is to create a golden calf in the heart. It is to forge a god in our own image and then stamp the covenant Name upon it. That is why this sin spirals so quickly; once we redefine Yahweh according to our preferences, the descent into depravity is only a matter of time.

The problem with this is that the Israelites still carried gods from Egypt all the way to the end of Joshua's work...

- o **Joshua 24:14 (NIVUK84)**

14 "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. **Throw away the gods your forefathers worshipped beyond the River and in Egypt,** and serve the LORD.

~

Before we begin to think that this problem is exclusive to the Israelites, we need to examine ourselves to see whether we have the same tendencies. We have found in ourselves that it is all too easy to have "left Egypt" and then find idolatrous practices in our lives. This shows up in unconquered Nabal traits that we accept as normal, and then we give ourselves over to it. Areas of our lives, like contention and unforgiveness, become idols that we worship if we do not rid ourselves of them completely.

Remember that the Israelites were willing to tear off their gold to make this bull; the opposite would be to put on Christ! Being like Christ in speech, deed, and emotion is the best attack on all idolatrous attempts on your heart. Those who belong to God have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Those who are straying from the Lord are those who seek to break the 1st and 2nd commandment like the Israelites did. Calling something in your life YHWH when it is clearly not is the fastest way to derail your faith and pierce yourself with many griefs. We usually see this show up in the lives of Christians when they say that they have been forgiven, but they haven't, or when they say that they have obeyed, and they clearly have not.

Christians who say that they have been forgiven when they have not, do so because they want to keep sinning while feeling like it is ok. Those who say they

are obeying when they are not are doing so because they want to have the appearance of being in Christ while living a lie. This is the same as what the Israelites did in this chapter. What has always been the problem is the pseudo form of worship of Yahweh....

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At this point, we think it is appropriate to remind you of a picture we showed you in Exodus 15B of a rock that was discovered at Jabal Al Laws, also known as Mt. Sinai.



As you look at this slide, we want to remind you of what Joshua 24 says that the Israelites had been carrying the gods with them that they brought from Egypt. This should be a remarkable change of perspective for you. Do you picture the Israelites carrying Egyptian Idols with them the whole way through the desert? With this in mind, we wanted to show you what a bull idol from Egypt would have looked like.

(Read Points on Slide)

THE APIS BULL

- Thought of as the son of the gods and an intermediary between men and the gods.
- Believed to have been sacrificed and then reborn.
- Believed to have been conceived through a ray of sunlight or lightning.
- Was associated with the King of Egypt.
- It was given the title: "The Renewal of Life".
- Was believed that his breath could heal, strengthen others in proximity.
- The Greeks gave him a human form.

References

1. Quote: Virtual Egyptian Museum
2. Vos R.L. The Apis Embalming Ritual - P. Vindob. 3873. Peeters publishers 1992, ISBN 978-90-6831-438-0. Retrieved 2015-07-02.
3. "Apis Bull". Walters Art Museum.
4. Anabasis of Alexander (<http://websfor.org/alexander/arrian/book3a.asp>), Arrian, from websfor.org
5. Arrian, Anabasis, VII. 26
5. Wikimedia Commons has media related to Apis.

Further reading

1. Dorothy J. Thompson, Memphis Under the Ptolemies, Second Edition. Princeton, 2012.
2. Jacques Vandier, "Memphis et le taureau Apis dans le papyrus Jumilhac" (in French), in Jean Sainte-Faire Gamot (ed), Mélanges Mariette. Cairo, 1961.
3. R. L. Vos, The Apis Embalming Ritual: P. Vindob. 3873. Leuven, 1992.



External Links

The Virtual Egyptian Museum: Apis (<http://www.virtual-egyptian-museum.org/Collection/FULLVisit/Collection.FULLVisit-JFR.html?./Content/METL.L00887.html&0>)

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It is most likely that the golden bull in Exodus 32 was intended to be a copy of the Apis Bull that was popular in Egypt. With that said, you should be able to see how close the Apis Bull paralleled the truths of the Gospel and yet it was not. This is the most dangerous form of idolatry. Listen to what Psalm 106 says about this.

o Psalm 106:20 (NIVUK84)

20 They exchanged their Glory for an image of a bull, which eats grass.

There is nothing worse than worshipping something that looks like God and yet is not. We can give you many examples of what this looks like in the Christian life... like calling something the Will of God when it clearly is not..., but for now we need to move on for the sake of time.

6 So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterwards they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

Notice that there are five things that the Israelites did here.

(READ SLIDE)



These five things are the anti-grace of God and they constitute the downward death spiral into depravity. The first thing that was done was that they rose early. This correlates to the human effort that is involved when there is something that you want to do that appeals to your flesh and you are willing to do whatever it takes to do it.

~

Many examples come to mind when we think about this. For instance, most Christians find it challenging to get to church on time but have no trouble waking up early to go on a vacation. Others tend to complain about how late church will go during a midweek service, but have no issues going to the movies or a ballgame on a Thursday night. Listen to this passage.

- o **1 Kings 12:29–30 (NIVUK84)**

29 One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan.

30 **And this thing became a sin; the people went even as far as Dan to worship the one there.**

In this passage, the King of Israel set up idols in the nation and the people traveled even further to worship them than if they would have gone to Jerusalem. **In our**

observation, people will go to the extreme limit to worship what is appealing to their flesh... while grumbling about what it costs to serve the LORD.

The next thing that the Israelites did was to offer a burnt offering.

You can see that after they started in human effort, they resorted to offering burnt offerings, which is really them trying to cover up their own sins. You can see this same principle at work in the words of Saul himself, found in 1 Samuel 15:

- o **1 Samuel 15:20–21 (NIVUK84)**

20 “But I did obey the LORD,” Saul said. “I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king.

21 The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, **the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal.”**

This can show up in many ways in churches, such as giving to the homeless instead of tithing, or sending money to starving children in Africa, but supporting abortion. The most pertinent examples can be found within our own lives when we opt to participate in actions that make us feel good, when it is just a cover-up for the evil that we want to keep doing. This is the same reason that rich people donate to charities. In short, it is when we do the things we already want to do and call it God to make it seem holy.

~

After rising early and offering burnt offerings, the Israelites offered fellowship offerings to the golden bull. This can be likened to the progression of human effort, which leads to covering up sin and then engaging in trying to bribe God.

- o **Deuteronomy 16:19 (ESV)**

19 You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality, and you shall not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous.

With that said, we cannot help but think that the reason anyone would try to bribe God is that they are hoping to blind him and twist what his word says about them.

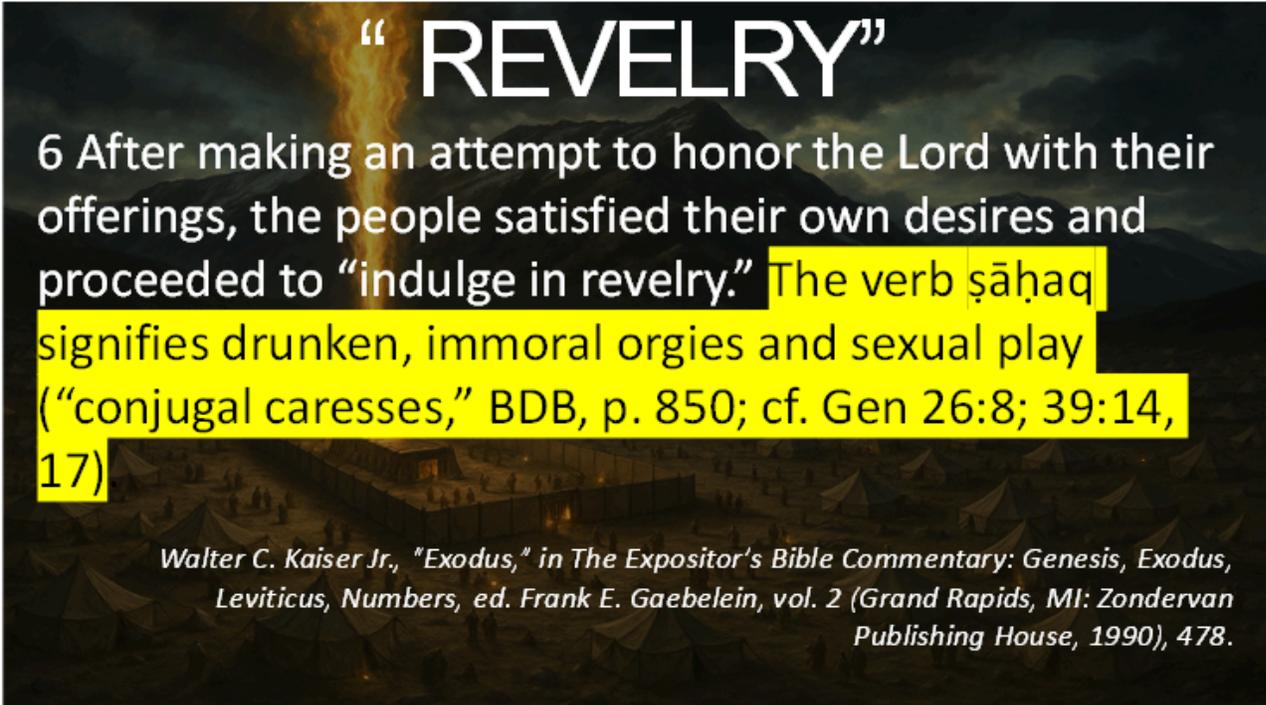
To give you some examples of how Christians do this, they would rather give a large offering than fulfill the vows that they have made to the Lord. Most Christians would love to participate in a big one-time emotional repentance event rather than live a life of repentance. This is all an attempt to earn favor with the Lord while planning to do what they really want.

People do these three things: rise early (which is human effort), Burnt offerings (which is covering up sin), and fellowship offerings (which is bribing God), so that they can get to the last two things, which are eating and drinking, and engaging in Pagan revelry.

The goal of walking through the first three things is so that the Israelites could engage in eating, drinking, and revelry. We have a slide to show you what these terms in Hebrew really mean.

~

(Read Slide)



“ REVELRY ”

6 After making an attempt to honor the Lord with their offerings, the people satisfied their own desires and proceeded to “indulge in revelry.” The verb **ṣāḥaq** signifies drunken, immoral orgies and sexual play (“conjugal caresses,” BDB, p. 850; cf. Gen 26:8; 39:14, 17)

Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “Exodus,” in The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 478.

The real reason that people will fake their way into a semblance of a relationship with the Lord is so that they can indulge their flesh in an unbridled fashion.

- o **Philippians 3:19 (NIVUK84)**

19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.

This is not just talking about a desire for food; this is talking about someone whose goal is to serve their own cravings, desires, and lusts.

- o **Proverbs 7:10–15 (NIVUK84)**

10 Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.

11 (She is loud and defiant, her feet never stay at home;

12 now in the street, now in the squares, at every corner she lurks.)

13 She took hold of him and kissed him and with a brazen face she said:

14 "I have fellowship offerings at home; today I fulfilled my vows.

15 So I came out to meet you; I looked for you and have found you!

This woman in Proverbs has the same issue as the Israelites; she is saying that she is giving offerings and fulfilling vows, but she is only saying that because she wants something from the man. If we are trying to give something to the Lord only to bribe him into turning a blind eye towards what we really want, aren't we doing the same thing?

~

- o **Numbers 25:1–3 (NIVUK84)**

1 While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women,

2 who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate and bowed down before these gods.

3 So Israel joined in worshipping the Baal of Peor. And the LORD's anger burned against them.

The lure towards these other gods is wrapped in the sinful indulgence of pagan revelry and immorality. The same could be said about Islam, Mormonism, and all Christian attempts to ignore the truth of the scriptures: This starts with a blatant desire to allow and propagate sin and the desire to commit sin unhindered. The Bull has many manifestations, but they all contort the truth and offer wickedness while calling it God. The truth is that Pagan Revelry equals unchallenged sin.

People always go through the first three steps to get to the last two. Listen to Paul's commentary on this issue.

- o **1 Corinthians 10:6–8 (ESV)**

6 Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. 7 Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." 8 **We must not indulge in sexual immorality** as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.

Paul's understanding of the event is that they indulged in sexual immorality. This event in Exodus is going to culminate in the execution of those who engaged in these practices. We suggest that the key to preventing this from happening is to kill the sin in the first three stages before the desire leads to actual death. Let's keep moving.

~

7 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, because **your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. 8 They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.' 9 "I have seen these people," the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people. 10 Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation."**

It is quite hilarious to see the way that God is speaking to Moses here. He is telling Moses that the Israelites are "his" people, meaning Moses' people, and he is saying that Moses brought them out of Egypt when clearly the entire ordeal was initiated and carried out by God. We think that this is both funny and beautiful at the same time. Other times in the Book of Exodus, you will see that Moses tells God, "your people"! God is viewing Moses as a partner in his plan, and this shows the special relationship that they both had.

The next thing that we want to discuss is how God clearly commands Moses to "go down" and deal with the people, but he also says that he wants to be left alone so that his anger could destroy the people and make Moses into a great nation instead. Why would God tell Moses to go down if the plan is to destroy the

people? Clearly, God is at work in the dialogue. Perhaps it is best to view these statements like a divine counsel room discussion that includes Moses as a partner in the dialogue. Take a look at this next verse with us.

~

- o **1 Kings 22:19–23 (ESV)**

19 And Micaiah said, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left; 20 and the LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?’ **And one said one thing, and another said another.** 21 Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, saying, ‘I will entice him.’ 22 And the LORD said to him, ‘By what means?’ And he said, ‘I will go out, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ **And he said, ‘You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so.’** 23 Now therefore behold, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the LORD has declared disaster for you.”

You can see in this passage that Micaiah had knowledge of a discussion about how the will of God would be carried out regarding the people of Israel. Now God and Moses are in a discussion, and God is revealing his honest thoughts to Moses, but you should take notice that this discussion does, in fact, result in the preservation of the people.

This is no different from most War Council meetings held by those in government. There may be many discussions about killing someone or even a group, but most of the time, the discussion results in a pathway to life for those who are being brought up. In these verses, we are getting to see the private discussion between God and Moses, and the reason is that we are getting to see that Moses and God had a special partnership that most do not have. God makes reference to this relationship with Moses in other areas of the word:

- o **Jeremiah 15:1 (ESV)**

15 Then the LORD said to me, “Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn toward this people. Send them out of my sight, and let them go!

~

The point in Jeremiah's day is that even if these men were there, judgment would still come. However, it should be noted that God placed Moses and Samuel's level of discussion with Himself on a different level than other people in the context of judgment and intercession.

A traditional Jewish understanding is that the community survived that day on the basis of Moses' relationship with God.

(READ SLIDE)

MOSES, THE MEDIATOR

“Let Me be.”

If Moses were not to be comfortable with this destruction, the Israelites would be protected from it, because of God's love for him (Moses) (Gersonides).

Carasik, M., ed. (2005). Exodus: Introduction and Commentary (M. Carasik, Trans.; First edition, p. 284). The Jewish Publication Society.

The Jewish community sees the purpose of this conversation between God and Moses as God giving the opportunity for Moses to be the one to intervene.

Pause and consider what is really happening in this exchange. Many people immediately begin asking philosophical questions like, "Did God change His mind? Does he know the end from the beginning? If He knew He wouldn't destroy them, why speak this way at all? Can God alter His plans?"

But that is not what we should be focusing on or what the text invites us to ask.

~

The point of the passage is what God is drawing out of Moses. He is inviting Moses into His own council. The Lord allows Moses to feel the weight of divine justice so that Moses might rise up into divine mercy. God desires participation. He is forming Moses into an intercessor.

Instead of destruction being the purpose, God wanted Moses to intercede. He reveals His righteous anger so that Moses will stand in the gap.

We think that this is beautiful and strikingly similar to Jesus. We will see these parallels continue between Moses and Jesus as we continue. Next verse.

11 But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. "O LORD," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. 13 Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.' " 14 Then the LORD relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

~

There are so many fascinating dynamics at work here in this passage that we want to explore with you. Let's approach them slightly out of order so you can appreciate each aspect.

First, consider the words that Moses uses while speaking with the Lord.

THREE IMPERATIVE HEBREW WORDS USED BY MOSES

שוב

Turn / Return

הנחם

Relent / Be moved

זכר

Remember

He is speaking in the imperative toward the Lord concerning what He just said He would do.

He literally says, "turn from the burning of your nose" to God, referring to God's anger. This word in Hebrew is shuv! You might recognize it from the word Teshuva!

~

Right after Moses uses this word, he then tells God, hinachem! Be moved or change your position on what you just said you would do. Let's look more closely at what we are seeing:

READ 1st line & HIGHLIGHTS

RELENT

nacham (נָחַם, 5162), "to repent, comfort." - a change of the heart or disposition, a change of mind, a change of purpose, or an emphasis upon the change of one's conduct.

Most uses of the term in the Old Testament are connected with God's repentance: "... It repented the Lord that he had made man ..." (Gen. 6:6); "And the Lord repented [NASB, "changed his mind"] of the evil which he thought to do unto his people" (Exod. 32:14, KJV). Sometimes the Lord "repented" of the discipline He had planned to carry out concerning His people: "If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them" (Jer. 18:8); "If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good ..." (Jer. 18:10); In other instances, the Lord changed His mind; obviously, He changed when man changed to make the right choices, but He could not change His attitude toward evil when man continued on the wrong course. As God changed His actions, He always remained faithful to His own righteousness.

In some situations, God was weary of "repenting" (Jer. 15:6), suggesting that there might be a point beyond which He had no choice but to implement His discipline. An instance of this action was in Samuel's word to Saul, that God took the kingdom from Israel's first king and intended to give it to another; Samuel declared, "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent" (NASB, "change His mind"; 1 Sam. 15:29).

God usually changed His mind and "repented" of His actions because of man's intercession and repentance of his evil deeds. Moses pleaded with God as the intercessor for Israel: "Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people" (Exod. 32:12). The Lord did that when He "... repented [changed His mind] of the evil which he thought to do unto his people" (Exod. 32:14). Again, however, God remained faithful to His absolutes of righteousness in His relation to and with man.

W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr., Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996), 201-202.

Moses is now in a conversation with the Almighty where he is using imperative words with Him concerning changing His actions. Just the thought of this causes trepidation to rise.

~

In addition to Shuv and Hinachem, he then tells God to Zachar. Let's take a closer look at this word.

READ 1st line & HIGHLIGHTS

Remember

zakar (זָכַר, 2142), "to remember, think of, mention." The first occurrence of zakar is in Gen. 8:1 with God as the subject: "God remembered Noah ...: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged." In Gen. 9:15 God said to Noah: "And I will remember my covenant ...; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." As in these two cases (cf. Gen. 6:18), "remember" is used of God in respect to His covenant promises and is followed by an action to fulfill His covenant. God delivered Lot from Sodom because of His covenant with Abraham to bless all the nations through him (Gen. 18:17–33): "God remembered Abraham, and brought Lot out of the catastrophe ..." (Gen. 19:29, NIV).

This marks the history of Israel at every major point: "And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, ... and I have remembered my covenant.... and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians ..." (Exod. 6:5–6). The promise "to remember" was repeated in the covenant at Sinai (Lev. 26:40–45), God's remembrance was sung in the Psalms (98:3; 105:8, 42; 106:45), and the promise was repeated by the prophets in regard to restoration from captivity (Ezek. 16:60). The new covenant promise is: "... I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:34).

Because of this God's people pray, as Moses: "Turn from thy fierce wrath.... Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest ..." (Exod. 32:12–13); or Nehemiah: "Remember ... the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses ..." (Neh. 1:8, quoting Lev. 26:33); or the psalmist: "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me ..." (Ps. 25:7); or Jeremiah: "... Remember, break not thy covenant with us" (Jer. 14:21).

W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr., Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996), 201–202.

As Moses is speaking to God in such a bold manner, it is clear that He has Abraham in mind as he mentions the patriarchs in his plea for God to remember. You must recognize at this point that Moses is not barking orders to the creator of the universe. Remember verse 11 starts off by saying, Moses sought the favor of the Lord.

~

Take a closer look at this word:

DO NOT READ

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|------|
| 11 | And | Moses | prayed | before | the | Lord |
| καὶ ¹ | Mωυσῆς ³ | ἔδεήθη ² | ἐναντὶ ⁴ | → | Kupiou | |
| kai | Mōusēs | edeēthē | enanti | | Kyriou | |
| καί | Mωυσῆς | δέομαι | ἐναντὶ | | κύριος | |
| kai | Mōusēs | deomai | enanti | | kyrios | |
| C | NNSM XP | VAPI3S | P | | NGSM | |

2 Corinthians 5:19–21 (ESV)
 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Mt 9:38 therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

Lk 10:2 And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers

Moses “prayed”

At the top of this slide, you can see the word used in the LXX to describe what Moses is doing is praying. On the right side of the slide, you can see these words' usage throughout the Scripture in the Greek: ask, implore, entreat, beg, pray.

In 2 Corinthians 5:20, Paul uses this language, "We are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We "IMPLORE" you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." You then see at the bottom, Jesus instructing his disciples to pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest.

In regards to what we are seeing with Moses, we think that this divine commentary is worth reading.

- o **Psalm 106:19–23 (NIVUK84)**

- 19 At Horeb they made a calf and worshipped an idol cast from metal.
- 20 They exchanged their Glory for an image of a bull, which eats grass.
- 21 They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt,
- 22 miracles in the land of Ham and awesome deeds by the Red Sea.
- 23 So he said he would destroy them— **had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them.**

~

The discussion of whether or not God would destroy the people is not the point of this passage. The point is that God allowed Moses to be a part of the discussion.

In tonight's introduction, we reminded you of what we covered concerning Abraham sitting in on God's council to discuss His plan for Sodom and Gomorrah. Tonight, we have another man sitting in the council of the LORD. This got us wondering, who else might be in Yahweh's council?



We now know that Abraham and Moses have been in the council of the Lord, but consider these passages:

- o **Jeremiah 15:1 ESV**

“Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn toward this people. Send them out of my sight, and let them go!”

As the Lord is speaking to Jeremiah about judgment on His people, He mentions 2 specific men who acted as intermediaries in Israel's history. He makes the point that even if they were standing before Him, He would not honor their request.

~

Listen to another passage in Ezekiel.

- o **Ezekiel 14:13–14 (ESV):**

13 “Son of man, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it and break its supply of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast,

14 even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord GOD.”

In this passage in Ezekiel, the Lord is expressing that His mind is so made up about destruction that will come on His people that even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in the land, they would not be able to turn His wrath away from the people.

While going into each of these men's stories would yield rich revelations, it is not within our purview tonight. Rather, we want to focus on how God highlights certain men who clearly interacted with Him in ways that saved the lives of others because of their intercession.

Yet when God speaks through Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the declaration is staggering: even if Moses, Samuel, Noah, Daniel, or Job were present, the judgment would stand. The point is not that intercession is powerless — but that there are moments when the decree has passed beyond appeal.

What emerges is a biblical picture of a council setting — men permitted to stand before the Almighty, to speak, to reason, to appeal to covenant, reputation, and promise. At times, God invites or allows that exchange. At times, He responds. But at other moments, the decision is fixed.

The nature of God is such that He is setting an example for us of working in teams. He convenes with His counsel in 1 Kings 22 when He says, "Who will entice Ahab?" and He considers the ideas of spirits that come forward. In Job 1 and 2, the sons of God come to present themselves before the Lord and give reports. In Isaiah 6, He asks, "Who shall I send? Who will go for us? And Isaiah answers, "Here I am, send me," and the Lord responds. In Psalm 82, God takes His place in the divine council. He even invites others to come and reason with Him. Isaiah 41:21 says, "Present your case, set forth your arguments". Isaiah 1:18 says, "Come now, let us reason together."

~

You might begin to wonder where the Israelites would have been if they didn't have Moses there to change God's mind. You might start to get the impression that these men prevent God from destroying, as if He needs to be convinced to do what is right. Let's take a look at a passage that helps clear up any confusion.

o **Hosea 11:8-9 NET**

“How can I give you up, O Ephraim?

How can I surrender you, O Israel?

How can I treat you like Admah?

How can I make you like Zeboyim?

I have had a change of heart.

All my tender compassions are aroused.

9 I cannot carry out my fierce anger!

I cannot totally destroy Ephraim!

Because I am God, and not man—the Holy One among you—

I will not come in wrath!

Who helped change the Lord's heart in this passage? Who was it that caused His compassion to grow for His people? Any time you see men like Abraham and Moses interceding for the people, you must remember whose Spirit is in them, causing them to rise up in intercession. It is the Spirit of the Lord in each of these men that rises up to intercede on their behalf. The Lord chooses to partner with men, chooses to place His Spirit in them, and when they are in submission to His Spirit, He makes them like Him. These are the kind of men who can sit in the council of the Lord, men who live in submission to His will, who remember His Words and pray earnestly according to His covenant promises.

15 Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands. They were inscribed on both sides, front and back.

16 The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

~

We want to introduce you to a new thought that we have never had in regards to these verses. It is clear to us that the intentional inclusion of the details about how the tablets were inscribed on both sides is a direct connection regarding the tablets being like a "Ketubah" or a marriage contract between Adonai and the people of Israel. The Ketubah is a Jewish marriage contract that would be written

by the groom and delivered to the bride, and it would have been written on both sides.

With that in mind, take a look at this next slide.

(READ SLIDE)

DESTROYED KETUVAH

Just as the bridegroom is forbidden to cohabit with his bride after marriage unless he has written and delivered the ketubah to her, so the husband is forbidden to live with his wife for even one hour if she no longer has it in her possession. Therefore, if the ketubah is lost or destroyed, the husband is obliged to write a new one with the same terms as in the original. Thus, when the Jews were expelled from France in 1306 and robbed of all their possessions, Rashba ordered that his followers refrain from conjugal relations until every man gave his wife a replacement ketubah...

Today, the ketubah represents the covenant of the couple's marriage and their new household...

...It is customary in these communities to read a special ketubah on Shavuot, marking the "wedding" of God and Israel when the Torah was given at Mount Sinai.

EISENBERG, R. L., The JPS guide to Jewish traditions, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia 2004 1st ed., 44–45.

In Jewish communities, married couples were not allowed to live together if the Ketubah was destroyed. This may add new insight into why Moses broke the tablets the moment that he saw the Israelites sinning and why God inscribed new tablets. It is quite possible that Moses saw the Israelites sinning and decided to break the tablets or the "ketubah" so that God would not dwell with the people in their state of wickedness and therefore destroy all of them. It is likely that Moses broke the Tablets to give the Israelites the opportunity to get right with Adonai, and when the tablets are rewritten, Adonai could be near to his bride in a way that would not result in their destruction!

~

Take a look at this next slide.

(Read Slide)

DESTROYED KETUVAH, PT 2

Rabbah 46:

Moses saw that they sinned, and he broke the tablets. This is analogous to a prince who took a wife, wrote a marriage contract, and placed it in the possession of a close friend. Sometime later, evil reports emerged about her. What did the close friend do? He tore up her marriage contract. He said: 'It is preferable that she be judged as a single woman and not as a married woman.'

Midrash Rabbah, Exodus Rabbah 46: 1. Translated by Rabbi Dr. Raphael Panitz. Edited by Maurice Simon and H. Freedman. London: The Soncino Press, 1939.

This midrashic passage offers a parable comparing Moses' breaking of the tablets to a friend tearing up a marriage contract to protect a bride from harsher judgment. Then we know that after dealing with the issue, he rewrote the Ketuvah.

17 When Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting, he said to Moses, "There is the sound of war in the camp."

~

Just a short note before we move on, we were right in Exodus 24 when we discussed the fact that Joshua did not go all the way to the top of the mountain with Moses. If Joshua was all the way up the mountain when Moses was told what they were doing, he would already know what the sound is.

18 Moses replied: "It is not the sound of victory, it is not the sound of defeat; it is the sound of singing that I hear."

It is hard to convey the tone of the original Hebrew, but this statement from Moses is less matter-of-fact sounding, and it is more of a lament.

(Read Slide)

MOSES' LAMENT

So, 32:18 TEV has “Moses said,” and NAB has “But Moses answered.” The rest of the verse has been generally recognized as poetry in the Hebrew, and 32:18 NRSV and others display it as such. There are three lines with four words to a line. Literally the Hebrew says:

Absence-of sound-of singing-of strength;
and-absence-of sound-of singing-of weakness;
sound-of singing I am-hearing.

Osborn, N. D., & Hatton, H. A. (1999). A handbook on Exodus (pp. 762–763). United Bible Societies.

~

The point of this is that in response to what Moses is hearing, he breaks out in a poetic stanza that is very familiar to the book of Lamentations. Listen to the way that the LXX translates this.

- o **Exodus 32:18 (LES)**

18 And he said, “It is not a sound of those who lead out in might, nor a sound of those who lead out in retreat, but rather a sound of those **who break out from wine** that I am hearing.”

The point of the poetic structure is not happy on Moses' part, but more like a dirge or lament. They sounded like drunk idiots. As we move on, we are going to see Moses break out in full anger, but notice that this started out in sadness.

19 When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain.

We have already commented on the Jewish perspective that Moses was sparing the people in their state of sin by destroying the Ketuvah, but we want to show

you a few more thoughts in Jewish literature regarding how they view Moses in this passage. Take a look at this next slide.

~

(Read Slide)

MOSES, THE SIN BEARER

Shemot Rabbah 46

I saw, and behold, you had sinned against the Lord your God” – he saw that Israel would not survive, **and he joined himself with them and broke the tablets**. He said to the Holy One blessed be He: ‘They sinned and I sinned, as I broke the tablets. If you pardon them, pardon me as well, as it is stated: “Now, if You will bear their sin” (Exodus 32:32) – pardon my sin as well. But if You do not pardon them, do not pardon me, but rather, “erase me please from Your book that You have written”’ (Exodus 32:32). Rabbi Aḥa said: **He did not move from there until he cleared their sin, as it is stated: “Moses turned [vayifen] and descended” (Exodus 32:15) – [he descended] once he cleared [pina] their sin.**

Midrash Rabbah. Exodus Rabbah 46: 1. Translated by Rabbi Dr. Raphael Panitz. Edited by Maurice Simon and H. Freedman. London: The Soncino Press, 1939.

The point of this slide is that, in the view of the Rabbis, Moses is seen as an intercessor who takes the sin of the people onto himself. Their idea is that Moses descended from the side of God to the people. He then associated himself with the sin of the people. He calls for the redemption of the people based on his own merit. Then he ascends again to the side of God. To us, their thoughts about Moses sound very much like the chiasmic structure that is found in Philippians 2.

- o **Philippians 2:6–11 (NIVUK84)**

6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 **but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant,** being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! 9 **Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,** 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and

under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

~

We are drawing this comparison based on the thoughts of the Rabbis themselves. The Rabbis have no motive or desire to make observations of Moses that would be similar to Jesus, and yet they cannot, and we cannot stop seeing obvious observations about Moses being a deliverer and an intercessor.

- o **Deuteronomy 18:15 (ESV)**

15 “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—

Moses told the people that God would raise up for them another leader who was like him in every regard. When you are thinking about Jesus' words, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me," you should be thinking about this verse and about how Moses said that there would be one coming after him who would do the things that he did for the people of Israel and do them in the same way.

20 And he took the calf they had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.

We have already made several comparisons to God being the groom and Israel being the bride, so we think that it is important to pause here and make one more connection for you in this regard.

When you think about this verse, you might think that this is an unusual punishment for those who sinned, but we believe that there is more going on than meets the eye.

~

We think that this verse should be understood in light of what we read in Numbers 5:18-22.

- o **Numbers 5:18–22 (NIVUK84)**

18 After the priest has made the woman stand before the LORD, he shall loosen her hair and place in her hands the reminder offering, the grain

offering for jealousy, while he himself holds the bitter water that brings a curse.

19 Then the priest shall put the woman under oath and say to her, “If no other man has slept with you and you have not gone astray and become impure while married to your husband, may this bitter water that brings a curse not harm you.

20 But if you have gone astray while married to your husband and you have defiled yourself by sleeping with a man other than your husband” —

21 here the priest is to put the woman under this curse of the oath—“may the LORD cause your people to curse and denounce you when he causes your thigh to waste away and your abdomen to swell.

22 May this water that brings a curse enter your body so that your abdomen swells and your thigh wastes away.” “ ‘Then the woman is to say, “Amen. So be it.”

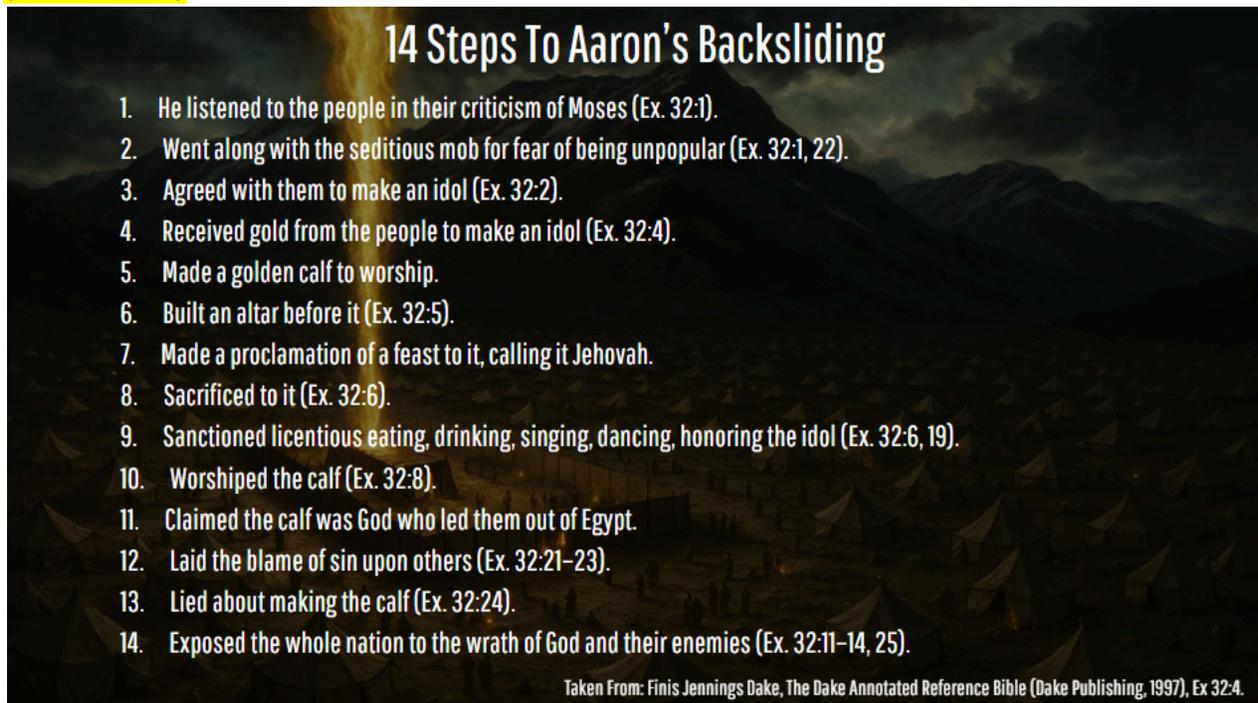
The idea is that Moses is doing the same thing to Israel as a priest would make an unfaithful wife do. This would happen because not all of the Israelites would have been guilty, and there definitely would have been a remnant who did not join in with the pagan revelry, and by making the Israelites drink the powder, it would be clear who was unfaithful to their groom, Adonai, and who had been faithful. On this note, the Rabbis believe that a plague broke out among the people and revealed those who had sinned, and that is how the Levites were able to identify which Israelites to kill. This only goes to show that even in an unfaithful state, Adonai is still treating Israel like a bride.

~

21 He said to Aaron, “What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?”

It is understandable that the first person that Moses addressed was his own brother. As you read this verse, you can probably imagine that these words were delivered with tones of sadness and shock that were underscored by deep anger. With that said, we think that the answer to Moses' question is a very important one and has nothing to do with what the people did to Aaron, but rather the straying of Aaron's own heart.

(Read Slide)



14 Steps To Aaron's Backsliding

1. He listened to the people in their criticism of Moses (Ex. 32:1).
2. Went along with the seditious mob for fear of being unpopular (Ex. 32:1, 22).
3. Agreed with them to make an idol (Ex. 32:2).
4. Received gold from the people to make an idol (Ex. 32:4).
5. Made a golden calf to worship.
6. Built an altar before it (Ex. 32:5).
7. Made a proclamation of a feast to it, calling it Jehovah.
8. Sacrificed to it (Ex. 32:6).
9. Sanctioned licentious eating, drinking, singing, dancing, honoring the idol (Ex. 32:6, 19).
10. Worshipped the calf (Ex. 32:8).
11. Claimed the calf was God who led them out of Egypt.
12. Laid the blame of sin upon others (Ex. 32:21-23).
13. Lied about making the calf (Ex. 32:24).
14. Exposed the whole nation to the wrath of God and their enemies (Ex. 32:11-14, 25).

Taken From: Finis Jennings Dake, The Dake Annotated Reference Bible (Dake Publishing, 1997), Ex 32:4.

This list was taken from Dake's reference Bible, and we think that it is a good one. The point of showing you this is that the people had gotten to the point of all-out sin, and Aaron's own backsliding helped it to progress. This is important to consider when being put in positions of authority in the Family of God.

Those who maintain their holiness and closeness to the Lord have the ability to slow and deter the downfall of the people. The opposite is also true. When leaders are compromised, it will always give license to and speed the decline of the congregation.

~

22 "Do not be angry, my lord," Aaron answered. "You know how prone these people are to evil. 23 They said to me, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.' 24 So I told them, 'Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.' Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!" 25 Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughing-stock to their enemies.

As we showed you in the 14 steps to Aaron's backsliding, Aaron is now deferring responsibility, blame shifting, and denying all personal responsibility. Because of

this, the people are now "running wild". This state of the people has now become so deranged and defiled, and the Hebrew is even clearer about this.

The Hebrew word for "running wild" is the word "Para" (H6544), and it means to let go, let down, or become loosened. The people are now in a state where something inside of them has come undone. They once had an internal restrictor that prevented them from giving themselves to all-out sin, and now they have torn off the righteous rules of the Law and begun to act as if they had never received the Law at all.

- o **Proverbs 29:18 (NIVUK84)**

- 18 Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law.

The problem was not their sight but their lack of sight. This whole thing started when they "saw" that Moses had not come down from the Mountain. They are essentially saying that if they could have seen Moses standing before them, they would not have done this. Because we know that Moses is not the problem, we understand that the people's lack of sight is the issue - they were not putting the right things before their eyes.

They had all heard the 10 commandments spoken by God's own voice! If they simply had kept the law that God had corporately spoken to them, namely, "you shall not make for yourself a carved image," they would not have cast off restraint! We must keep the law before our eyes at all times!

~

This is the same principle that is at work in those who do not want to be disciplined, do not want to be in the word, and do not want to be in fellowship... To some degree, they want to be undone, and therefore they willingly take their eyes off of what they are supposed to be watching.

The answer is to keep yourself in the community of God and keep your eyes on the things that God has set before you... Keeping your eyes on the Law. Failing to do so will always isolate you to your own primitive and basic desires and isolate you from the community.

Demonic things happen in isolation; this is why it is a must to get in and stay in fellowship. Every time that we don't have the "revelation" before our eyes, we become "para" or undone. If you have the habit of seeking solitude, stop it, repent, and get your heart right before God.

- o **1 Samuel 3:1 (NIVUK84)**

1 The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

This is the ending of the judges period... When everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

What caused it? The Word of the Lord was rare. There was no revelation. This shows up in the desire for accountability or the lack thereof. If you do not want accountability, then do whatever you want. Just don't blame us or anyone else when you become undone, and God brings judgment.

- o **Hosea 4:6–7 (NIVUK84)**

6 my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.

7 The more the priests increased, the more they sinned against me; they exchanged their Glory for something disgraceful.

~

Do you often complain about not having revelation? This is not an excuse. You don't have revelation because you have forgotten the Lord and you have not placed your eyes on him and what he wants. God is not lacking in his desire to reveal precious things. God desires to give you revelation as soon as you place your eyes on him and commit to seeking him alone!

- o **Amos 8:11–12 (NIVUK84)**

11 "The days are coming," declares the Sovereign LORD, "when I will send a famine through the land— not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the LORD.

12 Men will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of the LORD, but they will not find it.

The result of not hearing the Words of the Lord is that all stagger toward their deaths. Sometimes God will stop speaking to get their attention. He wants to see if they will notice and whether or not they will return to him.

Notice that in this passage, God is addressing Samaria. This is because of what is happening in 1 Kings 12:26-33.

o **1 Kings 12:26–33 (NIVUK84)**

26 Jeroboam thought to himself, “The kingdom is now likely to revert to the house of David.

27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam.”

28 After seeking advice, the king **made two golden calves**. He said to the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

29 One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan.

30 And this thing became a sin; the people went even as far as Dan to worship the one there.

31 Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites.

32 He instituted a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival held in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. This he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made. And at Bethel he also installed priests at the high places he had made.

33 On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a month of his own choosing, **he offered sacrifices on the altar he had built at Bethel**. So he instituted the festival for the Israelites and went up to the altar to make offerings.

~

These are the people that Amos is speaking to when he is talking about a famine of the Word of the Lord, and notice that these people are doing the same thing that is happening in Exodus!

- They claimed to be serving the Lord, just like in Exodus.
- They kept some semblance by offering sacrifices just like the people did in Exodus!
- Neither the event in Exodus nor the event in 1 Kings required holiness.

- Both events were based on the fear of the people and the retention of the people.
- In this same event, God withdrew and stopped speaking to them, In Exodus, Moses was not in front of them... In both events, the Words of the Lord or the man speaking the Words of the Lord was not near, and this was a test for the people to see what they would do.

The last part of verse 25 is Moses noticing that Aaron had let the people become a "laughingstock". This is direct language that Moses is using to tie in an earlier event in Israel's history.

- **Genesis 38:20–23 (NIVUK84)**

20 Meanwhile Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite in order to get his pledge back from the woman, but he did not find her.

21 He asked the men who lived there, "Where is the shrine-prostitute who was beside the road at Enaim?" "There hasn't been any shrine-prostitute here," they said.

22 So he went back to Judah and said, "I didn't find her. Besides, the men who lived there said, 'There hasn't been any shrine-prostitute here.' "

23 Then Judah said, "Let her keep what she has, or we will become a **laughing-stock**. After all, I did send her this young goat, but you didn't find her."

Judah states his concern as "we will become a laughingstock," but the truth is that Judah's behavior is already a laughingstock. The difference is whether or not men know about it, and his concern is for the maintenance of his own reputation—a reputation that, at its core, has become terrible. Consider:

- **Numbers 32:23 (ESV)**

23 But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out.

~

Repentance is one of those interesting things. The devil will try to convince you that you shouldn't repent, or else your character would just be damaged in front of everyone. But the fact is that your character is already damaged when you engage in sinful behavior. All we're talking about is whether or not everybody

knows your true state. Everyone should take note that your sin will always find you out, no matter how hard you try to bury it.

How comfortable are you with people knowing the real you? Wouldn't we all prefer to appear just a little holier, a little more righteous, a little closer to Christ than we actually are? Truthfully, doesn't that describe every one of us? Repentance frees us from this charade. It allows us to cast off the burden of appearances and begin the transformation toward being like Christ.

Why were the people in Exodus a laughingstock? Because they were running wild and out of control, and they cast off the standard of God. Do you know what the cure was? The dividing line of God's black and white standard. If you're for God, get on this side of the camp and get a sword. And that's how the Levites are born. They were those who loved God more than they loved their brothers, and they strapped on swords and killed 3,000 of them that day. What causes you to be a laughingstock? This happens when you're disregarding God's standard for your own self-interests, sympathies, or perceived reputation.

~

26 So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me." And all the Levites rallied to him. 27 Then he said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.' "

You have heard many sermons preached on this topic, so we do want to keep our comments short while offering a less common point of view. In light of what God said to Moses about destroying the people, we think that the actions of the Levites are an extension of God's mercy. Instead of the entire nation being destroyed, God was faithful to remove those who had defiled themselves so that the nation could be refined!

28 The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died. 29 Then Moses said, "You have been set apart to the LORD today, for you were against your own sons and brothers, and he has blessed you this day." 30 The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." 31 So Moses went back to the LORD and said, "Oh, what a great sin

these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. 32 But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.” 33 The LORD replied to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book.

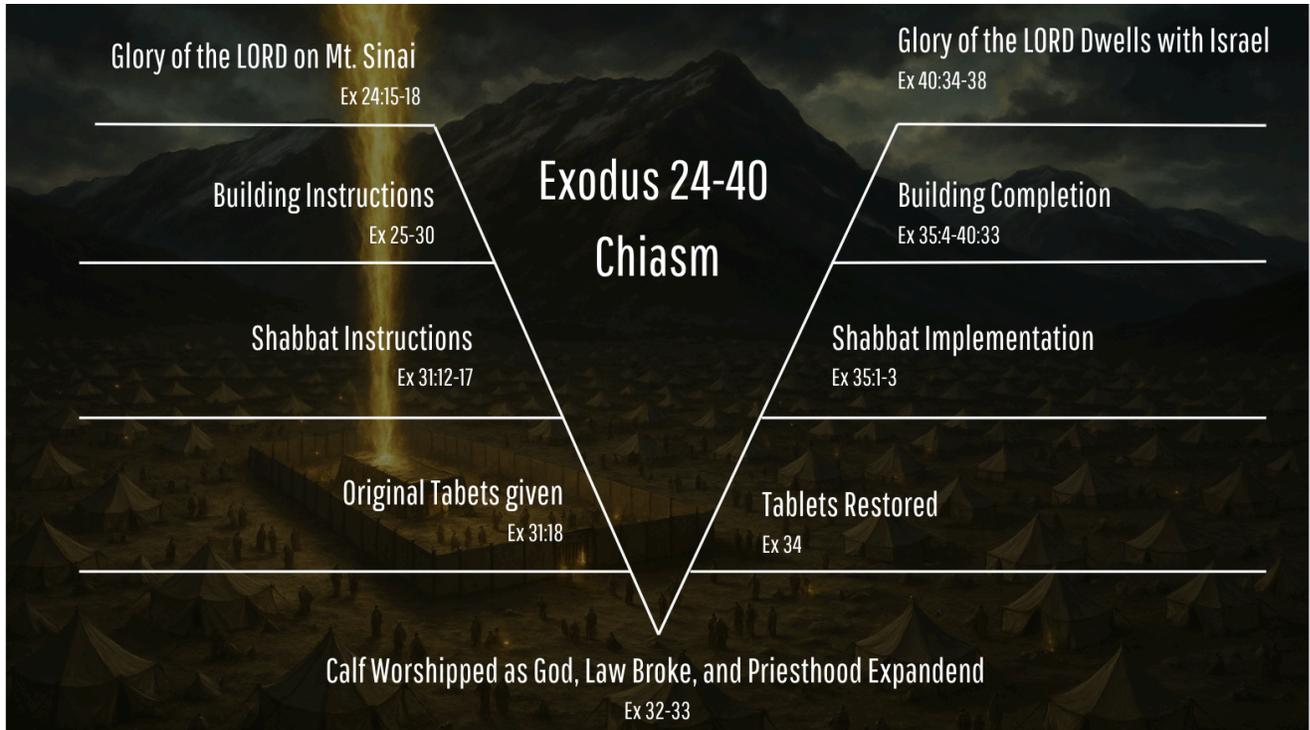
34 Now go, lead the people to the place I spoke of, and my angel will go before you. However, when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin.” 35 And the LORD struck the people with a plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.

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You can see from these verses that not all Israel had sinned. God was able to say that whoever had sinned would be blotted out of his book, which means that there were many who did not sin.

With that in mind, we want to spend the balance of our time sharing with you the unparalleled truth of this chapter. We have already drawn parallels between Moses and Jesus and how the Rabbis view Moses in the same way that the Apostles saw Jesus. On this next slide, we want to show you a chiastic structure that you have seen before. We are doing this to show you that there is a divine design in the structure of the Book of Exodus, and the details of this chapter serve to highlight something about God's nature.

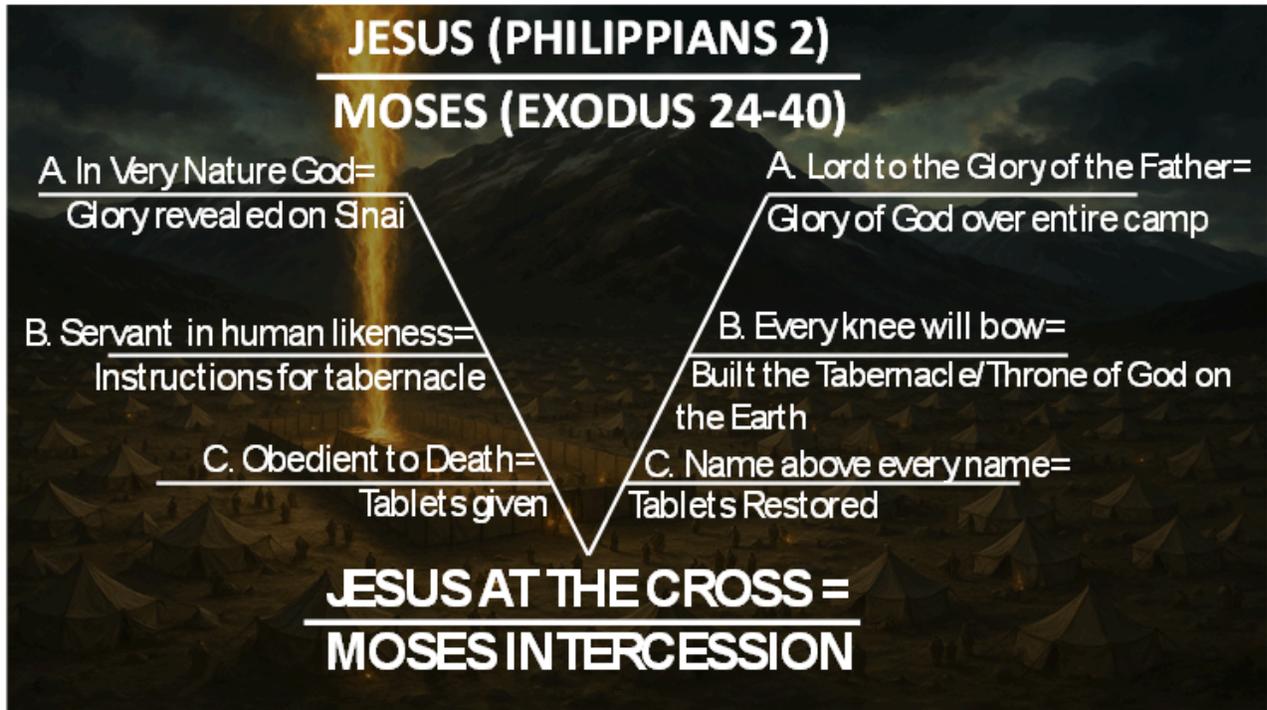
(DO NOT READ)



As you can see, the unparalleled truth in the structure is the events that are occurring in this chapter. With that in mind, there are some new details that we would like to include in this unparalleled truth that we have not previously understood - that within the unparalleled truth, God wanted the intercessor in Moses to rise! On this next slide, we want to show you two chiastic structures that are overlapping. One is the chiastic structure that is in Philippians 2, and the chiastic structure that is in Exodus 24-40, and we are going to add the information about Moses the intercessor in the unparalleled truth section.

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You can see from the slide that Jesus, being in very nature God, correlates to the Glory that was originally revealed on Mount Sinai. This culminates in what we see on the other side of the structure: That Jesus is exalted to the Glory of God the Father and that the glory of the Lord is over the entire camp. Next, Jesus, being a servant in human likeness, correlates to the tabernacle or tent. Remember, Jesus "tabernacled among us". This leads to the Tabernacle being built on the other side of the structure and is tied to every knee bowing to Jesus as Lord! Next, you will see that Jesus was obedient to death, which correlates to the Tablets being given and destroyed. This leads to the other side of the structure, where the tablets are restored, and Jesus is resurrected and given a name that is above every name.

The unparalleled truth at the bottom that the entire structure is pointing towards is that God called an intercessor to rise up in Moses, and then raised up a prophet like Moses - Jesus, who is the ultimate intercessor!

- o **Hebrews 7:23–25 (NIVUK84)**

23 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; 24 **but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood.** 25 Therefore he is able to save completely

those who come to God through him, **because he always lives to intercede for them.**

Moses lives to intercede for the people in Exodus and Jesus lives forever to intercede for the people!

~

- o **1 John 2:1–2 (NIVUK84)**

1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have **one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ**, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

- o **Exodus 32:31–32 (NIVUK84)**

31 So Moses went back to the LORD and said, “Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. 32 **But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.**”

Moses was the OG intercessor who put himself on the line for the sake of God's name and because God's name is on the people, for the sake of the people as well! Jesus is a prophet like Moses who laid himself down so that he could intercede on the people's behalf and they would be reconciled to God!

- o **Hebrews 9:24 (NIVUK84)**

24 For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he **entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.**

Both Moses and Jesus appeared in God's presence on behalf of those who could not because of their sin. You should be comforted in the fact that God has allowed you to partake in the blessing of having a Jewish intercessor who is allowed to enter in so that we can follow. Just like Moses interceded for a mixed multitude, Jesus also does the same for us!

- o **1 Timothy 2:3–5 (NIVUK84)**

3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

o **Romans 8:33–34 (NIVUK84)**

33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

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Jesus is the one who both condemns and intercedes, and Moses' ministry is the foundation that Jesus' is built on. You should be thankful for the work that Jesus has done on our behalf. If you are still here, it is because you have an intercessor working on your behalf. This chapter is the unparalleled truth of Exodus 24-40 because it highlights God's desire to save his people, and in doing so, he raises up someone to minister on their behalf!

o **Isaiah 43:10-13 (NIV)**

10 "You are my witnesses," declares the Lord,
"and my servant whom I have chosen,
so that you may know and believe me
and understand that I am he.

Before me no god was formed,
nor will there be one after me.

11 I, even I, am the Lord,
and apart from me there is no savior.

12 I have revealed and saved and proclaimed —
I, and not some foreign god among you.

You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "that I am God.

13 Yes, and from ancient days I am he.

No one can deliver out of my hand.

When I act, who can reverse it?"

This passage displays God calling for witness to his deliverance of Israel from their current oppressor, and of course, it is also speaking of their final deliverance. As in our chapter this evening, Israel has not been innocent; the LORD has used gentile nations to discipline them.

But NOW in the moment described by Isaiah, God is bringing judgment on those who have harmed Israel. This process of deliverance removes from Israel their idolatry! God is calling his shot in Isaiah that they will be witnesses that he is the one true God, and there is no other! Verse 13 makes the declaration that when God acts, no one can reverse it. He has chosen Israel and promised that they will be his and his alone. No one will be able to change that. This is the faithfulness of the God of Israel, and it is why it is such a privilege to be included. We are no less rebellious than they are but if he is able to save them... then he able to save us as well, if we are willing and repentant!

In light of this—*is anything too hard for the Lord?* No, despite their sin, he is able to take Israel his nation, and even Gentiles and make them Holy as he is Holy. *Will he sweep away the righteous with the wicked?* No, there is always a remnant He preserves for himself to fulfill His covenant promises! *Will not the judge of all the earth do right?* Yes, He always has and always will. All His ways are just and true!