

Torah Studies

Exodus: *Shemot* or Names



The Golden Calf

Exodus 32

Rabbi Learning – Boris Dubrov

Torah Studies

Depending on God's Word

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Depending on God's Word

- Psalm 119:25-28 (NKJV)

25 My soul clings to the dust;

Revive me according to Your word.

26 I have declared my ways,

and You answered me;

Teach me Your statutes.

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Depending on God's Word

- Psalm 119:25-28 (NKJV)

27 Make me understand the way of Your precepts;

So shall I meditate on Your wonderful works.

28 My soul melts from heaviness;

Strengthen me according to Your word.

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Introduction

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Introduction

Previously in Exodus:

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Introduction

Previously in **Exodus**:

- Moses has been up on Mt. Sinai for forty days.
- There he received the Ten Commandments and the instructions for the tabernacle.
- While up on the mountain he was in communication with God, but not with the rest of the people.

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Introduction

What to expect in Exodus 32:

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Introduction

What to expect in Exodus 32:

- While Moses was on the mountain, the people grew impatient.
- As a result, they convinced Aaron to make them an idol which he then made in the form of a golden calf.
- Then Moses came down.

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Message Outline



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Message Outline

- I. Making the Calf
- II. God Warns of Judgment
- III. Moses Intercedes
- IV. Moses Comes Down
- V. Moses Confronts Aaron
- VI. The Levites Show Loyalty
- VII. Moses Intercedes Again

32:1-6

32:7-10

32:11-14

32:15-20

32:21-24

32:25-29

32:30-35



I. Making the Calf

32:1-6

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32:1-6

- 32:4 These are your gods
- The phrase can also be translated “This is your God.”
- The Hebrew word *Elohim* is a plural, though it is often used for the one God.

I. Making the Calf

32:1-6

- 32:6 *The verb sahaq signifies drunken, immoral orgies and sexual play.” (Walter Kaiser)*
- The connotations are clearly sexual in **Genesis 26:8** (Isaac and Rebecca), and **39:14** and **17** (Joseph and Potiphar’s wife).



Walter Kaiser, Old Testament scholar and professor

I. Making the Calf

32:1-6

- At this stage in their history, the Israelites are still influenced by the idols of Egypt.
- There, people worshiped gods that often took the form of animals – including cattle.
- They want to continue doing that same sort of thing.

I. Making the Calf

32:1-6



If you really live with the consciousness of God's presence, you don't need a visible representation. That desire for visible representation testifies that you've lost your consciousness of God's presence in your life.

*– Chuck Smith,
Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa*

I. Making the Calf

32:1-6

- Several problems:

1. The people grew impatient.
2. Aaron listened to the people when he should have led them.
3. God—not Israel, not Aaron—has the final say on how He is going to be worshiped.

II. God Warns of Judgment

32:7-10

II. God Warns of Judgment

32:7-10

- God sees what is happening with the people and He is not happy.
- Notice that God calls them “your people, whom you brought up.”
- He says they are “Moses’ people,” not His own.
- He threatens to destroy them and start over with Moses.

III. Moses Intercedes

32:11-14

III. Moses Intercedes

32:11-14

- Moses' intercession is a wonderful example of a man who is committed to his calling.
- He is willing—much like Abraham—to argue his case before God.
- It is God's reputation, not his own, that is at stake.
- God listened to Moses' prayer.

III. Moses Intercedes

32:11-14



When Scripture says that the Lord “repents,” [or “relented” as here] it is using human language to describe a divine response. Twice during Moses’ lifetime God offered to destroy Israel and use Moses to found a new nation, but he refused ...

*– Warren Wiersbe (1929 – 2019),
pastor and Bible teacher*

III. Moses Intercedes

32:11-14



... The Jews never knew the price Moses paid to be their leader. How much they owed to him, and yet how little they showed their appreciation.

*– Warren Wiersbe (1929 – 2019),
pastor and Bible teacher*

IV. Moses Comes Down

32:15-20

IV. Moses Comes Down

32:15-20

- Moses is not pleased.
- Breaking the tablets was probably going too far.
- They were the work of God.
- Destroying the calf—perhaps right in front of them—was a necessary step.

IV. Moses Comes Down

32:15-20

- There was no way that the calf could be spared—not even as a souvenir or a sample work of art.
- Sometimes people are unwilling to go all the way and destroy their *idol*—their connection with sin.
- We need to keep in mind that if we do not destroy our idols, our idols are likely to destroy us.

V. Moses Confronts Aaron

32:21-24

V. Moses Confronts Aaron

32:21-24

- Aaron is plainly making the last part of this story up.
- It's a bunch of *bull*, or *calf* at least.
- Yet this is what we do.
- Hanging on to an idol leads to lies and coverups.
- These are usually about as effective as Aaron's story here.

VI. The Levites Show Loyalty

32:25-29

VI. The Levites Show Loyalty

32:25-29

- This section shows us how serious the problem had become in a very short time.
- This wasn't a little slipup.
- This was a major “breaking loose” from God's ordained boundaries.

VI. The Levites Show Loyalty

32:25-29

- Proverbs 29:18

Where there is no prophetic vision *[God's revelation]*
the people cast off restraint *[same word]*,
but blessed is he who keeps the law.

VI. The Levites Show Loyalty

32:25-29

- Before they ever got into the Promised Land, the people were already turning to idolatry.
- Their worship had turned into wild parties.
- Do we ever stop to consider how vital it is that God restrains us by His Word?

VII. Moses Intercedes Again

32:30-35

VII. Moses Intercedes Again

32:30-35

- Moses' prayer may remind us of Paul.
- In **Romans** he declares a similar sentiment also while thinking of the Jewish people.

VII. Moses Intercedes Again

32:30-35

- Romans 9:1-3

1 I am speaking the truth in Christ--I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit-- 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

VII. Moses Intercedes Again

32:30-35



How much of a burden do we have for the lost? How much of a burden do you have for the lost around you? God help us, we hardly have enough burden to even tell them of Jesus Christ ...

*– Chuck Smith,
Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa*

VII. Moses Intercedes Again

32:30-35



... We don't even have enough of a burden to share with them, much less to be so concerned that we say, "God, I wish that I myself could be accursed if they could only be saved."

*– Chuck Smith,
Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa*

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Conclusions

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Our Need for Patience

Conclusions

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Conclusions

Our Need for Patience

- Right at the beginning the people blame their desire for an idol on the fact that Moses is delayed.
- “He is taking a long time up on the mountain and we don’t know when he is coming down.”
- Yet God kept Moses there—things were no doubt going according to God’s plan.

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Conclusions

Our Need for Patience

- God does not operate on our timetable.
- The solution for this is that we need to be patient with God while He works out His answers.
- The wrong response is to desire another god.

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The Danger of Idols

Conclusions

The Golden Calf

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Conclusions

The Danger of Idols

- There is only One True God in all of heaven and earth.
- He reveals Himself to us in the Bible.
- The Israelites did not technically want another god.
- They wanted the One True God to be different.

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Conclusions

The Danger of Idols

- They wanted a god they could see—a golden calf, for example.
- They wanted a god they could worship with wilder parties and fewer moral restraints.
- They aren't the only ones to have fallen for this trap.

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Conclusions

The Danger of Idols

- 1 John 5:18-21

18 We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

19 We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one ...

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Conclusions

The Danger of Idols

- 1 John 5:18-21

... 20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

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The Value of Intercession

Conclusions

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Conclusions

The Value of Intercession

- Moses is one of the great intercessors in the Bible.
- And this is one of the great passages where we see it.
- What can we learn from him?
- What happens when there is no intercessor?

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Conclusions

The Value of Intercession

- Ezekiel 22:30

And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach [*“gap” NKJV*] before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none.

- In the days of Ezekiel and the exile, judgment came.

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The LORD and Moses Exodus 33

Reading Rabbi – Konstanty Szewczenko

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