

The Golden Calf

I recently started teaching Bible class for youngsters at our church, and this week we talked about the golden calf. As I was going over it with the intention of presenting it to children, the Lord brought some interesting things to mind by way of simple, personal application from Exodus 32.

A very short time after God said "**Thou shalt have no other gods before me**" and "**Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness...Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them**" (Exodus 20), the Israelites said to Aaron "**Up, make us gods which shall go before us**" (Exodus 32v1).

It's so important to have daily fellowship with God because we as fallen human beings are VERY quick to forget what God said! How often do you spend time with the Lord and in reading his word?

Rather than rebuking them and reminding them of what God said, Aaron failed as a leader and told them to "**Break off the earrings the golden earrings**" in their ears and "**bring them unto me**" (v2). Hundreds of years before, while preparing to meet with the LORD at Bethel, Jacob told his whole family to get rid of their idols and earrings, and then buried them under an oak tree near Shechem (Genesis 35v4). It's interesting that God the Holy Ghost made sure to put earrings and idols together in this passage (along with oak trees and the city of Shechem...but that's another study). Apparently they had picked back up the habit of wearing earrings from the Egyptians, and now all of a sudden the earrings are mentioned again as they gather the raw materials to make this idol of gold.

The Bible says that "**Evil communications corrupt good manners**" (1 Cor 15v33) Are you asking God to reveal the things in your life that are worldly? The King James Bible, coming through right on the money as usual makes it clear that it's not only the physical "**company**" of people, but the "**communications**" that we get from television, computers and smartphones, the radio, podcasts etc ,that we can also be corrupted by. In addition to being careful who we spend time with, we also need to be careful of what we watch and what we listen to. Have you picked up some "**earrings**" along the way that you need to deal with the Lord about? If you're a parent or the head of your house, are you anything like Aaron when worldly ideas are introduced to your family and into your home?

Aaron goes on to take the gold and fashion it "**with a graving tool**" (v4)! Not only does he break the second commandment, he actually put some thought, some time and creative effort into the project! Aaron was apparently a very creative man of many talents, but look how he used them! How are you using the gifts that the Lord has blessed you with?

When Aaron saw the people praising this god of gold he'd just engraved, and giving it credit for bringing them out of Egypt, "**he built an altar before it...and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD.**" (v3,4) Amazing! That idol didn't exist moments ago, and now they're giving it credit for bringing them out of Egypt?!

Does the Lord ever work in your life and then you go and give credit for that thing to something else (your high paying job, your insurance, your etc, etc ,etc) I certainly have!

Also, do you have worldly things that you try to **"spiritualize"** like Aaron did with that calf?

Another thing we see a great lesson in intercessory prayer. God tells Moses to stand back out of the way while He kills them, and Moses starts begging God for mercy based on what He has already promised: **"Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest...I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven"** (v13) Do you think God listens when you ask Him to save a sinner from His judgment? Who's on your prayer list? Have you reached out to them with the gospel? Moses did it and we can too!

John says **that "the wrath of God abideth"** (John 3v36) on men and women who have not believed the gospel, but **He "is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"** (2 Peter 3v9). When we pray for the salvation of a lost sinner, we're being alot like Moses and God will surely turn His wrath from that person if they will **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"** (Acts 16v31) and be saved.

Side note: if the Lord can consume you **"when his wrath is kindled but a little"** (Ps 2v7), imagine how serious it is when He's **"hot"**!

So Moses and Joshua come on down the mountain, see what's going on, and then Moses throws the stone tables and breaks them (v19) then completely destroys the idol (v20). Have you ever **"waxed hot"** (Moses-v19) about the same things that God waxes **"hot"** about? (God- v10, 11) Do you take sin seriously like Moses did?

When Moses confronted Aaron about the origins of the golden calf, Aaron told him a partial truth (v23, 24- he admitted to taking up the gold earrings, but lied about the fact that he took the time to use an **"engraving tool"** on it and made it sound like an accident)

When you read God's word or hear it preached, and you feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit dealing with you about something, do you admit to it like David did (Ps 51) or you make excuses like Aaron?

Finally, Moses asks for God to pardon the people's sin, or else **"blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book"** (v32), and what a great reminder that is of what God the Son did for sinners before God the Father. Moses, of course, was a sinner and unqualified to bear the sin of the people, but **when "God was manifest in the flesh"** (1 Tim 3v16) in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and lived a life that was **"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"** (Heb 7v26) and who was completely **"innocent"** (Matt 27v4) and **"without sin"** (Heb 4v14, 15), **"he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him"** (Heb 7v26).

Praise God for these things and more than we can ask ourselves before the Lord so that we can deal with sin in our lives and lead a life well pleasing in his sight.