

## Exodus Chapter 32

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V: 1 Meanwhile back on the ranch...

- Moses has been up on Mt. Sinai for the last 11 chapters receiving instruction from the Lord.
- Aaron and the elders have been left in charge; but seemingly haven't exercised any real leadership.
- Moses would be up on the mount for a total of 40 days.
- Amongst other things the number 40 represents testing; as Moses is gone for a couple weeks, then a month – the people get restless.
- The people gathered themselves unto Aaron.

**Jeremiah 10:23** “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”

- They want gods (plural) that can be made... the work of men's hands:

**Psalms 115:4-8** “<sup>4</sup>Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.  
<sup>5</sup>They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not:  
<sup>6</sup>They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:  
<sup>7</sup>They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not:  
neither speak they through their throat. <sup>8</sup>They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.”

- Who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, Moses, or God?
- What did God constantly want them to remember?

**Exodus 29:46** “And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the Lord their God.”

- Not only did they write off Moses, they wrote off God.

V: 2-4 I wish it said “but Aaron said unto them...” – that he would re-direct them to the Lord.

“*And Aaron said unto them....*” a continuation of the theme and thought.

**Proverbs 9:10** “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”

**Proverbs 29:25** “The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.”

- In the absence of Moses, the people go to Aaron. We can only speculate what actually transpired, or the motivation – what we do know is that when the pressure came, Aaron folded in compromise – and as the Lord puts it later – *“they corrupted themselves.”*
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- Here we see that they make a graven image, a physical manifestation – and object of worship. Breaking the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandments before they even get them.
- When we have a personal relationship with our creator, there is no need for a physical object to direct our attention to – we can be secure in our faith.
- When men make an idol, it first declares that that man has lost the consciousness of the presence of God in his life, and he seeks something that would remind him of God's presence.
- If we really live with the consciousness of God's presence, we don't need some kind of a visible representation.
- That desire for visible representation testifies that we've lost the consciousness of God's presence in our life.

V: 5-6 Aaron's role in these events cannot be discounted.

- Aaron makes an altar and proclaims a feast. Then they rose up early and offered sacrifices and peace offerings – a pagan festival. ☹

[Paul gives us commentary on this:](#)

**1 Corinthians 10:7-8** “<sup>7</sup>Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.  
<sup>8</sup>Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.”

V: 7-10 The children of Israel may have lost sight of God, but He did not lose sight of them!

- “... *thy people*...” – Moses' people as opposed to God's people... Your kind vs: My kind.
- “your son has a dirty diaper...”
- The Lord's anger waxes hot against them, seemingly God is prepared to wipe them out and start over with Moses.

- We need to bear in mind that if God intended to start over with Moses, He wouldn't have informed Moses about what was going on.
- He would simply have said, Moses – you and Joshua are the only ones left and we're starting over – Moses wouldn't have had a clue – but God gave him a clue for a reason.

Corrupted: (H7843) shachath, shaw-khath'; to decay, ruin; corrupt; destroy; mar, perish, spill, spoiler, utterly waste.

**Genesis 6:11-13** “<sup>11</sup>The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. <sup>12</sup>And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. <sup>13</sup>And God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”

**Genesis 18:28** Destruction of Sodom & Gomorah – destroy / shachath.

- “... *let Me alone...*” Moses may have already been interceding on behalf of the children of Israel.
- As though Moses could have stopped God? The point is that he could – through prayer, intercession.
- God was ready to forgive.
- God is testing Moses, and He's waiting for something:

**1 John 1:9** “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

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V: 11-14 This is a difficult passage because it looks at first glance that God is sort of a hot head, ready to wipe out the nation of Israel, and that Moses, a mere man – with a cooler temperament somehow intervenes with God, who is persuaded and changes His mind.

**Numbers 23:19** “God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?”

Paul tells us:

**Romans 7:18** “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing...”

**Jeremiah 10:23** “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”

- All of this includes Moses; so where did the impulse to pray, to intercede on behalf of the children of Israel come from? Where did this sudden outburst of love originate from?

**Proverbs 20:24** “A man’s goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?”

- God put it in Moses’ heart to love, God put it in Moses’ heart to pray, then God said OK.
- God was doing a work in Moses that would lead to a work in the people.

**James 1:17** “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

- Our problem is in the area of human language. Our God is infinite and beyond our ability to comprehend let alone describe in human words.
- We get to circumstances like this where we read words or phrases like God “repented” – God doesn’t make mistakes, He doesn’t change His mind. We just don’t have another way to describe it.

**Malachi 3:6** “For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

- This seems to be more about the work that God is doing in Moses’ heart with concern to the people.

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V: 11 Moses besought the Lord... requested, begged, pleaded – humbled himself.

- As Moses intercedes for the people, notice that he doesn’t make his appeal based on their innocence or their merit. Moses’ appeal is based on the character and reputation of God himself.

**Isaiah 43:25** “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”

- From a technical standpoint the people had broken the law and deserved death, the wages of sin being death.

V: 12 “repent”? (H 5162) nacham, naw-kham'; a breathe strongly; to be sorry, to pity, console, comfort, to have compassion, repent.

- This is different than the NT concept of repentance, which is to turn and go the other direction.

V: 13 Not only does Moses appeal to the character and reputation of God, now he turns to God's word, God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.

**Hebrews 6:13-18** “<sup>13</sup>For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, <sup>14</sup>saying, surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. <sup>15</sup>And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. <sup>16</sup>For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. <sup>17</sup>Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: <sup>18</sup>That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:”  
(1. God doesn't change. 2. God doesn't lie.)

V: 14 Note: “changed his mind” – not! And the Lord had compassion, pitied...

**Psalms 106:19-23** “<sup>19</sup>They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. <sup>20</sup>Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. <sup>21</sup>They forgot God their savior, which had done great things in Egypt; <sup>22</sup>Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red Sea. <sup>23</sup>Therefore He said that He would destroy them, had not Moses His chosen stood before Him in the breach, to turn away His wrath, lest he should destroy them.”

- God seemingly falls on His sovereignty:

**Exodus 33:19** “... I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.”

V: 15-16 Moses turns and goes down from the mount.

- More detail on the tables of the 10 commandments written with the finger of God.
- They were written on both sides. (God got there before Xerox)
- It is God's doing – any complaints, talk to God.

**1 John 5:3** “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.”

- They are all good, and good for us!

V: 17-18 Joshua was not with Moses during this time; he'd been waiting for Moses somewhere farther down the mountain – faithfully – he didn't know what God had revealed to Moses about the people corrupting themselves.

V: 19 1<sup>st</sup> : “I am the Lord your God, you are to have no other God before Me.”

- 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment: Thou shalt not make any graven image of anything, in heaven above or the earth below, nor shall you bow down to them to worship them.

The Law was broken both figuratively and literally.

- When we sin, it starts out in our heart as a thought, then eventually that thought or impulse is acted upon and becomes a physical manifestation of the condition of our heart.
- As the people are involved in breaking the commandments, Moses casts the tablets containing the law down and they are broken not only physically but in a representative sense as well.
- Also, the issue of who the real hot head might be is settled here... “Moses’ anger waxed hot” (tongue in cheek...)
- In actuality, Moses is accurately representing God to the people...

V: 20 Moses destroys the golden calf, burns it up in the fire, grinds it up, spread it across the water – and made them drink it!

- Dirty Harry hasn’t got anything on Moses – Moses was a radical dude!

[Nehemiah had a hands on ministry:](#)

**Nehemiah 13:23-25** <sup>23</sup>In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: <sup>24</sup>And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jew’s language, but according to the language of each people. (2 Corinthians 6:14) <sup>25</sup>And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, ye shall not give your daughter unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.”

- When Jesus saw the money changers in the Temple courtyards, those selling cattle; what was His response?
- We need a little dialogue? Or perhaps some sanctions? Mediation – that’s the course of action.

**John 2:15** “And when he had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the Temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changer’s money, and overthrew the tables.”

- When Moses made them drink that bitter water – I would bet that there wasn't a lot of argument.
- My guess is that Moses grabbed the first dude by the beard and explained how things work in the wilderness...

V: 21 Moses is looking at Aaron and in a sense he's saying you look too good – no marks on you – how did they compel you to do such a thing?

- Aaron became part of their sin, he became a facilitator.

**2 Corinthians 6:14-17** <sup>14</sup>“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? <sup>15</sup>And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? <sup>16</sup>And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. <sup>17</sup>Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,”

V: 22-24 There are only two responses to sin: repentance or rationalization. This statement by Aaron was not repentance.

- Aaron doesn't accept personal responsibility, it's the people's fault. Blame shifting.
- Aaron compounds things with additional lies.
- God is gracious and would still use Aaron, which to me means that even though it is not recorded, this was certainly dealt with at some point between God and Aaron.

Had it not been for Moses' intervention, Aaron would have died:

**Deuteronomy 9:20** “And the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time.”

- We can all take comfort in this part of the episode, because we've all done things that would disqualify us from God's service – yet He is merciful, gracious, and forgiving!

V: 25 The people were naked – sheds light on V: 6 about them rising up to “play”.

- Aaron is held responsible for their nakedness, their licentious behavior.

V: 26 Moses stood in the gate of the camp, outside the camp.

- Here it's a point, or a place of decision, a demarcation – whose side are you on?

**Matthew 12:30** “He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad.”

**Deuteronomy 30:19** “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:”

- The Levites take a stand with Moses, and the Lord.

V: 27 Kill those who were involved in this debauchery! Family, neighbor – no mercy!

**Hebrews 4:12** “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Sin is to be dealt with decisively!

V: 28 When the Law came down - 3,000 men died.

- Later, at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down:

**Acts 2:41** “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

[Referring to the letter of the Law as opposed to the Spirit of the Law.](#)

**2 Corinthians 3:6** “... for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

- Not everyone in the camp was involved; there were those who were simply waiting for some leadership. Those that were involved were either slain by the sword, or by the plague that the Lord would bring.

V: 29 God's original plan was to take the firstborn of the men, who would serve Him in the priestly role, later that plan was adjusted to the sons of Aaron, but now because of their obedience the Levites receive the blessing of being consecrated to God's service.

V: 30-31 Moses had represented God to the people. Now Moses would represent the people back to God with a message of repentance.

- Notice that Moses on behalf of the people states clearly that they were wrong in committing sin, and is specific about that sin – having made gods of gold.



- Biblical reconciliation starts with honesty: Please forgive me; what I did was wrong, I was wrong to .... This is no place for generalities.

V: 32 Moses asks God to forgive their sin, then there is a dash / pause as Moses waits on the Lord for a response.

- Moses is waiting, not sure what the answer will be, and he speaks from his heart – if you won't forgive them, then I don't want to live either.

- Only God can give us that kind of love:

**Romans 9:3** "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

- We want to be sure that our names are written in His book, the book of life.
- Those who reject Christ are blotted out, but everyone's name starts out in that book.

**Revelation 3:5** "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels."

V: 33 God states that He will be the one to determine judgment at the right time.

- Each person will be held accountable for their own sins.

**Revelation 22:12** "And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

V: 34 the fact that God tells Moses to lead the people to a different place implies that the answer to Moses' prayer is the salvation of the people from the wrath of God.

- God keeps His word, they will be led to the place which He told them of.

V: 35 While there is forgiveness, there are still the repercussions of what they had done.

**Galatians 6:7-8** "7Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."