

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

The Wilderness

THE GOLDEN CALF

Exodus 32

Elementary Lesson

Year One, Quarter Three, Lesson Two

[0280]

AIM: to use the story of the golden calf to teach my students to wait for God

OBJECTS TO HAVE: A calendar and a pen
A picture of a mountain (Mt Sinai, if possible)
Tablets of stone, or pictures of tablets of stone
A piece of gold jewelry
A picture of the golden calf
Your Bible

POINT OF CONTACT: Who can tell me how many days there are in the month of July? That's right, 31. Most months have 31 days. Four months have 30 days; and one month has 28 days. Who can tell me which month has 28 days in it? That's right, February.

Now, a month goes by pretty fast, unless you are looking forward to something special like your birthday. Then it seems like a month takes forever! But if you're not thinking about it, one day it's the first day of the month, and then the next thing you know, that month is over, and you're saying, "Hey, where did that month go? That was fast!"

But I'll tell you when a month goes REALLY slow, and that is when you are WAITING for something to happen, and you don't know WHEN it is going to happen. Like somebody says, "One of these days I'm going to take you swimming." And you say, "Great! When?" And they say, "Oh, I don't know, some time this month. I'll call you."

So you get out your calendar, and the first day goes by. You cross it off. The next day you don't hear anything, so you cross that day off, too. You say, "Maybe tomorrow they'll call." But that day, still no call. And you're waiting, and crossing off day after day after day. When that kind of thing happens, a month can take a really long time!

Today I am going to tell you about some people who were waiting for something to happen; and when over a month went by, they decided they weren't going to wait anymore. But they did something they never should have done, something that did not please God at all. Let me tell you about it.

STORY: God told Moses to come up into Mount Sinai, so that God could give Moses instructions for the people. Moses told the people, "I am going up into the mountain to meet with God. My brother Aaron will be in charge until I get back. I will see you then."

Moses went up into the mountain, and met with God there. God gave Moses His Law. It was a wonderful experience for Moses, one that would benefit the nation of Israel and the whole world for ever. God spoke to Moses for 40 days on that mountain. Exodus 24:18. In those 40 days God gave Moses many detailed instructions about how the children of Israel was to serve and follow God. God wrote all of this down for Moses on two large, flat pieces of stone. Listen to what the Bible says: *And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.* Exodus 31:18.

But meanwhile, down at the foot of the mountain, the people were beginning to wonder when Moses would be returning. At first they thought they would see him after a day or two. Then ten days had gone by. Then fifteen days. Then twenty days. Then a whole month...thirty days, and no word from Moses! Finally, after 40 days, some of the men of Israel got together and went to Aaron, Moses' brother, who Moses had left in charge of things while he was gone. They said, "Aaron, we need to talk to you. Do you know how long Moses has been gone? We have been keeping track. Moses has been up in that mountain for 40 days. 40 days, Aaron! We don't know what has happened to him, but we think it's safe to say that he is not coming back. He put you in charge, Aaron. You need to do something. The people are really starting to get nervous. We need a new god to take the place of Moses and his God."

Now, I want you to pretend for just a minute that you are Aaron. What should you do? The men are right...Moses has been gone for a long time, and nobody knows what has happened to him. They need a leader. They need somebody to tell them what is going on. Moses put you in charge. You've got to do something. What do you do? What decision will you make, Aaron?

Before you can answer that question, you must think it through. Who told you that you were in charge? Moses did. Who told Moses to go up into the mountain? God did. So if something happened to Moses, who is responsible? God is. And if something happened to Moses, who is in charge of Aaron and the people now? God is. So before I make a decision about what to do, who should I ask? GOD!

But Aaron did not ask God. Aaron just took it upon himself to do something. And the thing that Aaron did was just about the worst thing that he could have done. Moses decided to make a new god, like the people asked him to do.

What a foolish thought it is to think that you can MAKE God. Man can't MAKE God! God MADE man!

But Aaron built a fire. Then he told everybody to take off all of their gold jewelry, and throw it into the fire. People brought their necklaces, their bracelets, their earrings, their rings, and every other kind of gold that they had, and they put it in the fire. Aaron melted it all down, and he took that big hunk of gold out of the fire. He took some tools, and he began to shape that hunk of gold. He shaped it into the shape of a calf, which is a baby cow. When he was finished, he turned to the people and said, "Ladies and gentleman, do you see this golden calf? This is your new god! This is the god that brought you out of Egypt. From now on you will be worshipping this golden calf! And tomorrow we are going to have a special day of worship, to worship this golden calf." That next day was a day of partying, drinking, dancing, wicked music and all kinds of sin.

Back up on the mountain, God was finishing His meeting with Moses. God told Moses, "You better get down there to the people." Then God told Moses exactly what the people had done.

Have any of you ever climbed or driven up a tall mountain? It is a long, long walk down. Moses started his long walk down to the bottom of the mountain, and the closer he got to the bottom, the more he began to hear some wicked, wild music. He already knew what was going on, because God had told him. Before Moses got to the bottom, he met Joshua, who had been standing by waiting for Moses all that time. Joshua said, "Do you hear that Moses? I don't know what's going on down there, but it sounds like the people might be at war."

When Moses saw the calf, and the people partying around it, disobeying God's Word, he got so mad that he took the two tables of stone, and smashed them on the ground. Moses went and found Aaron and said, "What's going on here?" Aaron blamed the people. "We didn't know where you were, so the people gave me all of their gold, and I put it in the fire, and suddenly this calf came out."

Moses pulled out his sword and drew a line in the sand, and said, "Who is on the Lord's side?" Everyone who wanted to get right with God crossed over that line and stood with Moses. Then God judged all those who had sinned with the golden calf.

How did Aaron and the people of Israel do such a foolish thing? It is because they got tired of waiting for God. Oh, they would probably tell you that it was MOSES who they were tired of waiting for, not God. But remember, God is the One who called Moses into the mountain. It was God who was in control. When you get tired of waiting for God to work, you will do some foolish things, like the people of Israel did.

God knows what He is doing. God knows your need. God knows WHAT you need, and He knows WHEN you need it. Don't get tired of waiting for God to answer your prayer; just trust Him and obey Him. Don't get tired of waiting for God's blessing; just trust Him and obey Him. God knows what He is doing. He is in control. He won't let you down. Keep on praying. Keep on reading His Word. Keep on trusting Him.

Let's learn our memory verse. **Proverbs 1:10** – *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.*

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THE GOLDEN CALF

Exodus 32

Teen and Adult Lesson

Year One, Quarter Three, Lesson Two

[0280]

Teacher, choose one of the following truths to expand upon in teaching this portion of Scripture to your teen/adult class. Teach and apply the truth that you choose using statements and illustrations that are most helpful and applicable to your students.

I. WHEN WE GROW WEARY OF GOD’S TIMING, IT LEADS TO FOOLISH DECISIONS.

The people of Israel made this foolish decision because they didn’t have enough faith to trust that God was in control. The Bible says a great deal about “waiting” on the Lord. Psalm 27:14, Isaiah 40:31, Lamentations 3:25 are just a few examples. In the process of seeking to please God, striving to obey Him, we must be willing to do what we are supposed to do, while we wait for Him to make His next move. When we decide to go ahead with our own timing, we wind up making tragic mistakes that have a disastrous effect upon our lives and the lives of others.

II. CIRCUMSTANCES THAT REQUIRE PATIENCE OFTEN REVEAL THE REBELLION THAT IS IN OUR HEARTS.

By the time this incident was all over, God had separated the crowd that was truly willing to obey Him from the crowd that was not. The rebellion of the crowd that pressured Aaron to build “another god” was not created by Moses’ absence. The rebellion was already there. Moses’ absence simply revealed it.

III. WEAK FAITH IS BELIEVING IN A WEAK GOD.

The crowd that rebels here says, “Make us gods.” They were saying that to them, any old god would do. “We lost one god; let’s just make another.” How could anyone watch what God had done at the Red Sea, and not believe in His power? Yet, there are always those who do not recognize the obvious mighty power of God.

IV. PRESSURE SITUATIONS EXPOSE OUR WEAKNESSES.

This incident reveals, as much as any other, the weak leader that Aaron was. He did not have the courage, and perhaps not even the desire, to take a stand and say, “No, we’re waiting for Moses.” 32:1-3. Perhaps this was why, even though he was a talented speaker, God could not use him to stand before Pharaoh by himself. Aaron had no fortitude, no courage, no backbone. He caved to the pressure of the crowd. This incident also exposed Moses’ weakness—his temper. 32:19. When you face adversity, your weaknesses will be exposed.

V. THE “ANY OLD GOD” CROWD HAS NO CONVICTION IN THEIR DOCTRINE.

32:21-24. Aaron, who just the day before had created a whole new religion for the people, totally abandons that religion, and the people who embraced it, as soon as he had to face Moses. He demonstrates that he does not take his faith seriously, either his old faith or his new faith. Before you jump on board with the latest faith fad, realize that its promoters don’t really believe in it.

The Golden Calf

Exodus 32

[0280]

The Israelites Turn to Idol Worship

I. EXODUS 32:1-6 AARON CREATES A GOLDEN CALF

1 The people ask Aaron to make them a god in the absence of Moses

2-4 Aaron takes the people's gold and forms a golden calf

5-6 Aaron leads the people to worship and party before the golden calf

II. EXODUS 32:7-14 GOD TELLS MOSES THERE IS TROUBLE

7-10 God is ready to destroy Israel and start over with Moses

11-13 Moses intercedes for the people

14 God withholds His wrath

III. EXODUS 32:15-20 MOSES RETURNS TO THE PEOPLE

15-16 Moses leaves the mountain carrying the tables of stone

17-18 Joshua thinks he hears a battle, but Moses knows he hears a party

19-20 Moses breaks the tablets and destroys the golden calf

IV. EXODUS 32:21-29 MOSES DEALS WITH ISRAEL'S SIN

21-24 Moses confronts Aaron

25-26 Moses gives the people the opportunity to turn to the LORD

27-29 Moses has the idol worshippers executed

V. EXODUS 32:30-35 MOSES SEEKS GOD'S MERCY

30-32 Moses asks God to forgive the people's sin

33-34 God allows the people to proceed, but promises to deal with rebellious individuals

35 God sends a plague among the people because of their sin

Proverbs 1:10 – *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.*

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Unscramble the key words and phrases from today's Bible lesson.

MONUT ISINA _____

EMOSS _____

RAONA _____

ELRASI _____

ROFTY SAYD _____

GLENDO FLAC _____

CINDANG _____

SLABET FO _____

TONES _____

HOUSAJ _____

GUDEJ _____

My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

PROVERBS 1:10

THE GOLDEN CALF

Exodus 32

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The answer to today's puzzle

MONUT ISINA M O U N T S I N A I

EMOSS M O S E S

RAONA A A R O N

ELRASI I S R A E L

ROFTY SAYD F O R T Y D A Y S

GLENDO FLAC G O L D E N C A L F

CINDANG D A N C I N G

SLABET FO
TONES T A B L E S O F S T O N E

HOUSAJ J O S H U A

GUDEJ J U D G E D