

INTRODUCTION:

Chapter 31:1-18 God speaks to Moses and tell him that He has called Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur of the tribe of Judah by name and has filled him with the Spirit of God, giving him wisdom and understanding and knowledge in all manner of workmanship. Bezaleel is the first man ever spoken of as being filled with the Spirit of God. He carefully constructed the Tabernacle and its furniture with the help of others with special skills (Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan) according to the precise instructions of God. He was skillful to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber (**31:1-6**). The list of things to make:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tabernacle of the congregation, • the ark of the testimony, • the mercy seat, • all the furniture of the tabernacle, • the cloths of service, • the holy garments for Aaron the priest, • the garments of his sons to minister 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the priest's office, • the anointing oil, • sweet incense for the holy place • the table and his furniture, • the pure candlestick with all his furniture, • the altar of incense, • the altar of burnt offering with all his 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • furniture, • the laver and his foot (stand) following all that God had commanded them to do.
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The Lord continues to speak to Moses about keeping God’s Sabbaths. The Sabbath had two purposes: a time to rest and a time to remember what God has done. It’s a sign and a reminder between God and the children of Israel throughout their generations showing that the Lord makes them holy; and sanctifies them forever. They are to keep the Sabbath and make it holy to them, and everyone not honoring; defiles it shall die and anyone who works on the Sabbath shall be cut off from his people. Work for six days, but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest which is holy to the Lord. Therefore, if you work on the Sabbath he shall certainly be executed (put to death). The children of Israel are to keep and observe among themselves throughout their generations for a continuous covenant for all times, for it’s a sign between God and the children of Israel forever. Six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the seventh day He rested and was refreshed. God has finished speaking with Moses and now gives him the two tables of testimony, tables of stone written with the finger of God (**31:7-18**).

LESSON: I. ISRAEL’S REBELLION EXODUS 32:1-6

32:1 **And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.** Moses hasn’t come down from the mount of God yet, and it has taken too long (forty days and forty nights (24:18)—over a month) that the people had not seen him. You know how we get when there is a delay in our lives; something we’re looking for now—and we get antsy; anxious; and out of sorts. But what if the delay is from God—a divine delay from God? We could see this going on in the world today because God hasn’t taken away this “Coronavirus.” *“He’s delaying the process. He’s delaying the answer. It’s taking too long for us to go through this. It’s messing up everything we want to get back to.”* Just remember, when you’re anxious and impatient, you begin to doubt. So, in Moses’ delay they’re probably saying ‘I think

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he's dead.' 'Will we ever see him again?' 'The Lord has forgotten us.' And now they've come up with their own answer. The people gathered themselves together and went to Aaron demanding: *"get up and make us gods to lead us."* Why? - Because their leader Moses who has brought them out of the land of Egypt has disappeared and they have no idea what has happened to him. Even though Israel had seen the invisible God in action, they still wanted the familiar gods they could see and shape into whatever image they desired.

32:2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. Aaron didn't even put up a fight. He went into instructor or leadership mode: this is what you do— *"Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me."* The Lord had given the Israelites favor with the Egyptians, at their time of leaving. Silver, gold, and clothing and whatever they wanted (12:35) was given to them. God had plans to use gold in the construction of the tabernacle. This was not the Spirit-inspired craftsmanship of Bezaleel and Aholiab to build an idol.

32:3 And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. The people complied to the instructions of Aaron. They broke off the golden earrings that were in the ears of their wives, sons, and daughters, and brought them to Aaron with no regret.

32:4 And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. Aaron received from their hand all the gold and went right to work shaping a god with a carving tool making it into a molten calf. They then pronounced: *"These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."* They changed gods just like that! It was something they could see. The cow or calf was one of the most popular idols in Egypt (*Hapi and Hathor are two of the most worshiped cow gods, symbolizing of power and fertility*). This was something Aaron made. This molten calf surely did not bring them out of Egypt! In verse 1 they said, *"for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt."* They still didn't honor the Lord God!

32:5 And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the Lord. As Aaron looked at the calf, he also began to build an altar before it, proclaiming: *"To morrow is a feast to the Lord."* Well this has really gone too far!

32:6 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. After making the announcement on yesterday the people rose up early the next day to offer burnt offerings and to bring peace offerings. This became a feast to the Lord, so they thought. And all sat down to eat and drink, and rise and play. *"Sitting down to eat"* refers to the people eating the *"peace offerings"*, which were like a dinner with God. They served their idol with great energy and personal sacrifice. This is a tasteful way to speak of gross immorality among the people of Israel. They were no longer worshiping the true God. **This has become rebellion.**

II. THE LORD'S RESPONSE EXODUS 32:7-14

32:7 And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:— God didn't tell Moses about the situation until it was too late to stop it. God knew that this was going on while they were on the mount and tells Moses to quickly get back down the mountain. They didn't wait long to sin; go against God! In speaking with Moses, the Lord identifies the Israelites as **"your"** people – disowning Israel and making them Moses' people—The people



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you have led up out of the land of Egypt have fallen to depravity.

32:8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. The people have so quickly strayed from the path that God had commanded by making this molten image. There is a problem. The people have "*corrupted*" themselves and have "*quickly turned aside*" from the Lord. God already knew from all eternity what they would do.

32:9 And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:— This is the example of a horse or ox that refuses to be turned by the reins. They want to go their own way; do their own thing, follow after their own rules; be stiff-necked.

32:10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. This was God's announcement upon the people. He was announcing judgment against these people; the people He had just delivered out of Egypt. In other words, God was willing to wipe out all the Israelites, and just start over with Moses. And why does the Lord, the almighty God need to tell anyone to "*leave Him alone*" in order to bring this wrath down? Clearly, the Lord is inviting Moses' intervention.

32:11 And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?— So, Moses requested and implored of the Lord with a question as to why He is provoked to wrath against His people in which He had rescued and brought out of Egypt by His awesome power and mighty hand. This causes God to think and give an answer.

32:12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Moses goes on to remind the Lord God as to what a bad time for the Egyptians to begin to speak with sarcasm and mockery about Him bringing the Israelites out of the mountains and consuming them from the face of the earth. His name, character, and power would be called into question by the heathen if they were consumed. Moses is concerned about God's reputation and begs God to turn back from the heat of His anger; turn away from His fierce wrath and repent; renounce the plan to punish this evil against His people. This is Moses' plea of intercession for the people.

32:13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. Moses brings to God's remembrance of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, His servants where His own self swore and made this promise to them: "*He will multiply Abraham's seed as the stars of heaven; all the land God spoke of and promised, and Abraham's seed will inherit it forever.*" God never forgets. He just wants us to bring up His Word before Him.

32:14 And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people. Numbers 23:19 says "*God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent...*" He's "*Immutable*" (change not)! This expresses the pain of God's divine compassion. Being a compassionate God He thought to do... As He thought to do, God also says in Jeremiah 29:11 "*For I know the thoughts I think toward you... thoughts of peace*

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and not of evil, to give you an expected end." His previous announced plans shows us that there is judgment for our sin. He says He's seen this people, and behold He called them stiffnecked people (verse 9). It really gives others the opportunity to change their minds before He judges them. God is not a man that He should repent as a man repents in his ignorance of the future. That's why we can say that God knows all future circumstances and will never be caught off guard. However, in this case the intercession of Moses on Israel's behalf was needed as being a leader.

SUMMARY:

The Bible describes the Israelites becoming anxious after Moses had been delayed on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights. They demanded that Aaron make a god for them. Their thinking was, to look for new leadership and new gods; something is better than nothing. Aaron instructed the people to bring him their gold rings from the ears of their wives, sons, and daughters. The Bible then says that all the people broke off the gold rings from their ears and brought them to Aaron, who made a golden calf (an idol god). The idol became god to the Israelites in which they bowed down to the golden calf and made sacrifices to it. But the golden calf was a distraction from the real worship and from the lessons they were supposed to learn. God cannot be compared to a molten image. As Aaron looked at the calf, he built an altar before it, proclaiming: *"To morrow is a feast to the Lord."* After making the announcement on yesterday the people rose up early the next day to offer burnt offerings and to bring peace offerings (**32:1-6**).

God didn't tell Moses about the situation until it was too late to stop it. God knew that trouble was going on in the camp while He and Moses communed on the mount and tells Moses to quickly get back down the mountain. They didn't wait long to sin against God! In speaking with Moses, the Lord identifies the Israelites as **"your"** people – disowning Israel and making them Moses' people—The people you have led up out of the land of Egypt have fallen to depravity. Now, God condemned the people due to their lack of faithfulness. Enraged, God planned to destroy the Israelites, and make Moses a great nation instead of them. The people had so quickly strayed from the path that God have commanded by making a molten image. They had *"quickly turned aside"* from the Lord. The Lord said to Moses, *"I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people."* Then God announces judgment against these people. In other words, God was willing to wipe out all the Israelites, and just start over with Moses. Moses requested and implored of the Lord with a question as to why He is provoked to wrath against His people in which He had rescued and brought out of Egypt by His awesome power and mighty hand? He even says this was a bad time for the Egyptians to begin to speak with sarcasm and mockery about Him bringing the Israelites out to slay them in the mountains and then consumes them from the face of the earth. His name, character, and power would be called into question by the heathen if they were consumed. Moses is concerned about God's reputation and begs God to turn back from the heat of His anger; away from His fierce wrath and repent; renounce the plan to punish this evil against His people. Moses brings to God's remembrance of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, His servants where His own self swore and made this promise to them: *"He will multiply Abraham's seed as the stars of heaven; all the land God spoke of and promised, and Abraham's seed will inherit it forever."* God never forgets. He just wants us to bring up His Word before Him. And the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people. God is not a man that He should repent as a man repents in his ignorance of the future. That's why we can say that God knows all future circumstances and will never be caught off guard (**32:7-14**).

