Deciding Whose Side You Are On

Exodus 32

Text:

Introduction:

Each of us have had times in our lives when we had to decide whose side we’re on!

In our text we will see the children of Israel at a crossroad having to decide who and how they would worship.

Israel had been delivered from the bondage of Egypt. They had seen the great miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea. They had arrived at Mount Horeb (Sinai). Moses had made one trip up the mount and returned with the Ten Commandments. Upon his return he told the people to sanctify themselves for when he returned to the mount and received the rest of God’s commandments and instructions for worship. The people agreed to keep themselves pure before the Lord until Moses returned.

When Moses was gone, many days passed. The time now has been almost forty days since he left, and the people are starting to get anxious. This leads to a very sad event in the life of the Israelites:

Notice:

1. Aaron’s Flawed Decision

This decision was based on the will of the people (vs. 1)

**Exodus 32:1**   
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.

Note what the people desired: “Make us gods.”

The whole tone of the crowd here sounds contemptible toward Moses.

Remember:

**Acts 5:29**   
29 Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

There will be times in our lives when the crowd is wrong.

He neglected the principles of God.

**Exodus 32:2-4**   
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. 3 And all the people brake off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* unto Aaron. 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.

He did not want to become unpopular or perhaps the brunt of the people’s violent response due to the frustration of not knowing about Moses.

* He crafted a graven image.

**Exodus 20:1-4**   
1 And God spake all these words, saying, 2 I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth:

* They worshipped the graven image

**Exodus 32:5-6**   
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. 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.

Quote:

An idol is anything you turn to for help when God told you to turn to Him for help.

* They were dancing and naked (vs. 19, 25)

**Exodus 32:19**   
19 And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.   
  
**Exodus 32:25**   
25 And when Moses saw that the people *were* naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto *their* shame among their enemies:)

The word “play” also alludes to fornication and immoral behavior.

Note:

Aaron refers to this as a feast day unto the Lord…What an insult!

It was a disorderly riot—a frenzy.

They had sacrificed to the calf.

It had been less than 40 days before they had promised to sanctify themselves.

**Psalm 106:19-22**   
19 They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. 20 Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. 21 They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; 22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham, *and* terrible things by the Red sea.

2. The Lord’s Fiery Declaration – vs. 7-14

**Exodus 32:10**   
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.

A. They Were Guilty of Spiritual Corruption (vs. 7-8)

**Exodus 32:7-8**   
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*: 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.

Note:

He was angered by the contrast of being in the Lord’s presence and coming down to the depravity of man.

This day in which we are living there are many who say all gods are fine.

We must remember:

**2 Corinthians 6:15-18**   
15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 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. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

B. Because they Defrauded God of His Glory – vs.8

**Exodus 32:8**   
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.

Illustration:

J.S. Bach said, “All music should have no other end and aim than the glory of God and the soul’s refreshment; where this is not remembered there is no real music but only a devilish hub-bub.”

He headed his compositions: “J.J.” “Jesus Juva” which means “Jesus help me.” He ended them “S.D.G.” “Soli Dei gratia” which means “To God alone the praise.”

C. Because of their pride – vs. 9

**Exodus 32:9**   
9 And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it *is* a stiffnecked people:

3. Moses Firm Demonstration – Vs. 15-20

**Exodus 32:15-20**   
15 And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony *were* in his hand: the tables *were* written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other *were* they written. 16 And the tables *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God, graven upon the tables. 17 And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, *There is* a noise of war in the camp. 18 And he said, *It is* not the voice of *them that* shout for mastery, neither *is it* the voice of *them that* cry for being overcome: *but* the noise of *them that* sing do I hear. 19 And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. 20 And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt *it* in the fire, and ground *it* to powder, and strawed *it* upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink *of it*.

Moses appears with the tablets in his hand.

A. Moses Observation – vs. 19

He saw their idolatry

B. Moses Demonstration – vs. 19-20

He broke the tablets

He caused the people to drink the grindings

C. Aaron’s Explanation – vs. 21-25

**Exodus 32:21-25**   
21 And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? 22 And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they *are set* on mischief. 23 For they said unto me, 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. 24 And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break *it* off. So they gave *it* me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. 25 And when Moses saw that the people *were* naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto *their* shame among their enemies:)

Aaron’s desire to please the people, his inability to lead, or both overcame him.

His first excuse is that the people were set on doing mischief. In other words there was nothing he could do about it.

Note:

Verse 25—Aaron condoned their nakedness….

Illustration:

The words of Eleanor Roosevelt ring true: “One's philosophy is not best expressed in words. It is expressed in the choices one makes. In the long run, we shape our lives and we shape ourselves.”

D. Moses Dividing Question – vs. 26

**Exodus 32:26**   
26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who *is* on the LORD'S side? *let him come* unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.

Who is on the Lord’s side? Who will choose against idolatry and follow the Lord?

Joshua asked a very similar question:

**Joshua 24:15-16**   
15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. 16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;

Close:

In verses 32-33, Moses pleads for redemption—He was the mediator…And with the spirit of a godly patriot, he said he would rather die than see his nation die.

Note: The man who takes the strongest stand against your sin is probably the one who prays for you the most!

Whose side are we on?