

The Golden Calf

1 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered against Aaron and said to him, “Rise up and make us gods that shall go before us. As for Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”

2 Aaron then said to them, “Remove the golden earrings in the ears of your wives and daughters and bring them to me.” 3 So all the people removed the golden earrings in their ears and brought them to Aaron. 4 He received them from their hands; and he fashioned them with an engraving tool and made a molten calf. Then he said, “These are your gods, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt.” 5 So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. Aaron then made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord.” 6 Thus he rose early the next day and offered whole burnt offerings and peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

7 But the Lord said to Moses, “Go quickly! Get down from here! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt are transgressing the law. 8 They turned aside quickly from the way I commanded them. They made themselves a calf and are worshiping and sacrificing to it, and are saying, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt.’ 9 Now therefore, let Me be, that I may burn in wrath against them and consume them. 10 Then I will make of you a great nation.” 11 But Moses prayed before the Lord God and said, “Why, O Lord, does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians speak and say, ‘He brought them out with evil intent, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from Your fierce wrath and be merciful to the wickedness of Your people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Your servants, to whom You swore by Yourself and said to them, ‘I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of heaven for multitude; and all this land I spoke about to give their seed, they shall inherit unto the ages.’” 14 So the Lord granted mercy for the harm He said He would do to His people.

15 Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hands. They were stone tablets written on both sides, on one side and on the other. 16 Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets. 17 When Joshua therefore heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “There is a noise of war in the camp.” 18 But Moses said, “It is not the noise of those that begin the battle, nor of those that begin the cry of defeat, but the noise of those that begin the banquet of wine that I hear.” 19 So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, he saw the calf and the dancing. Thus Moses became very angry; and he cast the two tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. 20 Then he took the calf they had made, burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder; and he scattered it on the water and made the children of Israel drink it. 21 Moses then spoke to Aaron, “What did this people do to you that you brought so great a sin upon them?” 22 Aaron replied, “Do not be angry, my lord. You know how impulsive this people is. 23 For they said to me, ‘Make us gods that shall go before us; as for this man Moses, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ 24 So I said to them, ‘Whoever has any gold, let him remove it.’ Thus they gave it to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out.”

25 Now when Moses saw the people were scattered (for Aaron scattered them, making them a prey to their enemies), 26 Moses then stood in the entrance of the camp and said, “Whoever is on the Lord’s side, come to me.” So all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. 27 He said to them, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Let every man put his sword on his side and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.’” 28 So the sons of Levi did as Moses said to them, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day. 29 Then Moses said, “You filled your hands to the Lord today, each one on his son or brother, that blessing be given you.” 30 Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, “You committed a great sin. So now I will go up to God to make atonement for your sin.” 31 Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, “I pray, O Lord, these people have committed a great sin and have made for themselves a god of gold! 32 Yet now, if You will forgive their sin, forgive it—but if not, blot me out of the book You have written.” 33 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Whoever sins against Me, I will blot him out of My book. 34 Now therefore, go down and lead the people to the place of which I spoke to you. Behold, My Angel shall go before your face. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will strike them for their sin.” 35 So the Lord struck the people for making the calf which Aaron made.

Exodus 33

God Orders Israel to Depart Sinai

1 Now the Lord said to Moses, “Depart, go up from here, you and the people you brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your seed I will give it.’ 2 I will send My Angel before your face, and I will drive out the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Gergesite, the Hivite, the Jebusite, and the Canaanite. 3 I will bring you into a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.” 4 When the people heard this bad news, they mourned in lamentations. 5 For the Lord said to the children of Israel, “You are a stiff-necked people. Beware, lest I inflict another plague on you and consume you. Now therefore, take off your bright clothes and ornaments, and I will show you what I will do.” 6 So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their bright clothes and ornaments by Mount Horeb.

Moses before the Lord

7 Moses then took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of testimony. Thus it came to pass that everyone who sought the Lord went out to the tabernacle of testimony, which was outside the camp. 8 So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, which was outside the camp, all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he went into the tabernacle. 9 Now it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and God talked to Moses. 10 All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man at his tent door. 11 Thus the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. Then he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

God Promises His Presence

12 Then Moses said to the Lord, “Behold, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people.’ But You have not

let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, ‘I know you above all, and you have also found grace in My sight.’ 13 Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, reveal Yourself to me, that I may see You clearly and find grace in Your sight, and know this great nation is Your people.”

14 So He said, “I Myself will go before you and give you rest.” 15 Then he said to Him, “If You Yourself do not go up with us, do not bring us up from here. 16 For how then will it be known that Your people and I found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So both I and Your people shall be glorified beyond all the nations on the earth.” 17 The Lord then said to Moses, “I will also do this thing you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you above all.” 18 Moses replied, “Reveal Yourself to me.”

19 Then God said, “I will pass before you in My glory, and I will proclaim My name, the Lord, before you. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” 20 But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man can see My face and live.” 21 Moreover, the Lord said, “Here is a place by Me: you shall stand on the rock. 22 So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. 23 Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”

Exodus 34

A Second Set of Tablets

1 Now the Lord said to Moses, “Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets you broke. 2 So be ready in the morning to come up on Mount Sinai and to present yourself to Me there on top of the mountain. 3 But no man shall come up with you, and let no man be seen throughout all the mountain; let neither sheep nor oxen feed before that mountain.” 4 So he cut two tablets of stone like the first ones. Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai as the Lord commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone. 5 Now the Lord descended in the cloud; and He stood with him there, and he called upon the name of the Lord. 6 Then the Lord passed before his face and proclaimed, “The Lord God, compassionate, merciful, longsuffering, abounding in mercy and true, 7 preserving righteousness and showing mercy unto thousands, taking away lawlessness, wrongdoing, and sins; and He will not clear the guilty, visiting the lawlessness of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.” 8 So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the ground and worshiped. 9 Then he said, “If now I have found grace in Your sight, let my Lord go with us, for the people are stiff-necked; and You will take away our sins and lawlessness, and we will be Yours.”

The Covenant Is Renewed

10 The Lord then said to Moses, “Behold, I am establishing a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you are shall see the works of the Lord, for I will do awesome things for you. 11 Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I am driving out from before you the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Gergesite, and the Jebusite. 12 Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a stumbling-block in your midst. 13 But you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and

cut down their groves; and you shall burn the graven images of their gods with fire 14 (for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord God, a jealous name, is a jealous God), 15 lest you make a covenant with the foreigners of the land; and they indulge themselves in gross immorality with their gods by making sacrifice to them; and they invite you, and you eat of their sacrifices; 16 and you take of their daughters for your sons and give your daughters to their sons; and your daughters commit fornication with their gods, and your sons commit fornication with their gods. 17 You shall make no molten gods for yourselves.

18 “The Feast of Unleavened Bread you shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the season in the month of new grain; for in the month of new grain you came out from Egypt. 19 All that open the womb are Mine: every male firstborn among your livestock, of oxen or sheep. 20 But the firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a sheep, and if you will not redeem it, you shall pay a price. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem, and none shall appear before Me empty-handed. 21 Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest. There shall be rest in seedtime and harvest. 22 You shall observe the Feast of Weeks, the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year’s end.

23 “Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord God of Israel. 24 For I will cast out the nations before you and enlarge your borders; neither will any man covet your land when you go up to appear before the Lord your God three times in the year. 25 You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifices with leaven, nor shall the sacrifices from the Feast of Pascha be left until morning. 26 The first fruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the Lord your God. You shall not boil a lamb in its mother’s milk.”

27 Again the Lord said to Moses, “Write these words for yourself, for according to these words I established a covenant with you and with Israel.” 28 So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

Moses’ Face Shines

29 Now when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets were in Moses’ hand when he came down from the mountain), he did not know the skin of his face was glorified while God talked with Him. 30 So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses and the glorified appearance of the skin of his face, they were afraid to come near him. 31 Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. 32 Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the Lord commanded him on Mount Sinai. 33 When Moses finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. 34 But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever the Lord commanded him. 35 So the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that it was glorified; and Moses put the veil on his face again until he went in to speak with Him.