

Exodus 32: Israel and the Golden Calf

Read Exodus 32.

Watch video.

1. Worshipping creatures abhor a spiritual vacuum.

THE FAR SIDE • Gary Larson



The woods were dark and foreboding, and Alice sensed that sinister eyes were watching her every step. Worst of all, she knew that Nature abhorred a vacuum.

2. Nature abhors a vacuum: any absence of a regular or expected person or thing will soon be filled by someone or something else. What are some examples of this?
3. Why is it that as sinful human beings we have to be worshipping something?
 - a. We are creatures. We were created by God to have a relationship with the giver of our purpose and design (i.e., our Creator).
 - b. We were created to find our identity objectively (outside ourselves).
 - c. Our identity, whether we find it in God or something else, is what helps us make sense of who we are and where we belong. It orients us.
 - d. Once we are alienated from God, all the things we received from Him (safety, significance, security, meaning), we now try to find through something else.
 - e. We individually and corporately create false gods that give back to us the things we should seek only in God, including a way to help us make sense of who we are and where we belong.

f. From where do we receive these false gods?

- i. Historical.
- ii. Cultural.
- iii. Social.
- iv. Demonic.

4. Read Exodus 32:25-26 and Joshua 24:14-17. What are the similarities in these passages? Based on these passages, why does God require that we be a unique people that follow Him only?

How does Jesus the One to truly make us God's people? Read Ephesians 2:1-10.

5. Aaron's apostasy. One of the big questions from today's text is how Aaron could abandon the Lord so quickly. Read from article.

Based on this article, why does Aaron's apostasy seem a little less far fetched than we might at first suspect?

Read Exodus 17:4. Why was Aaron in a tough spot because of the complaining of the people?

How did Aaron try to excuse himself in Exodus 32:22-24?

Read Exodus 32:5. What does this say about Aaron's intentions?

6. As is typical in Exodus, the sharp justice of God upon sin is clearly revealed. What words and acts of justice and punishment do you find in 32:7-10; 25-29, 35; 33:1-6?

7. How did Moses reflect God's anger in 32:19-21?

8. Read Psalm 106:19-23. How does the psalmist recall Moses' relationship to God during the incident with the golden calf?

9. What is the role of a mediator? Read Exodus 32:11-14 and 30-35. How do we see Moses interceding in these verses?

10. As Moses prayed for the people, he became a forerunner of Christ. How was Christ a mediator during His life? Luke 23:34 and John 17:9-17.

11. How is Jesus' function as a mediator describe in Hebrews 7:24-27 and 1 John 2:1-2?

12. In times of pressure, uncertainty, and suffering, what are the golden calves to which we turn? How does God deal with our constant trend toward apostasy?