

Drinking Idolatry Exodus Chapter 32 Verse 17-24

Ex 32:17 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.

As Moses and Joshua are descending from the mount and out of the cloud of God's presence, Joshua hears the noise of the camp of Israel and thinks that it is the cry of war. Moses, having been informed by God what is going on: tells Joshua; listen closely to the sound, and you shall understand that it is not the noise of those who are fighting and winning a war, neither is it the sound of those who are losing a war; rather, it is the sound of singing. This tells us that there are two kinds of singing: one to worship idols, and one to worship God.

As they near the camp where they can see what is happening. Moses in anger cast the two tables of stone, made and written upon by God, to the ground and breaks them beneath the mount. This is the picture we spoke of earlier of the prepared body of Jesus coming to earth to be broken for sin, that the sins of all of God's people, those before and after Christ, would be eternally remitted. We shall not see the totality of this emblematic picture, until we are raised in the resurrection of the dead in Christ, when all the bodies of all of God's people will be sinless, incorruptible, and immortal, because of the broken body of Christ. In the eternal heaven; we shall be loosed from the laws of sin and death, the bonds thereof having been broken, when the body of Christ was broken for us, in His sacrifice for our eternal remission of sins, as seen in **1Co 11:24** "And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me." We know His body was broken for us because he told us in this scripture, which is emblematic of Moses breaking the two tables of stone. The picture being: Moses received the commandments in the mount, and they were broken below the mount, which is indicative of Jesus leaving heaven and coming to earth, to have his prepared body broken for us. That is what removed us from under the curse of the law, of eternal death for sin.

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 took the golden calf and burned it in the fire, then ground it to powder. Then, Moses scattered the powder on the water, and he made the children of Israel drink of it. Ground to powder means **to make it into dust**. Even gold dust will float on the water's surface tension. When Moses caused the people to drink the water, which had the dust of their golden idol upon it, the people were drinking their idols of gold.

What did this action carried out by Moses say to Israel. First, burning it in the fire would make the idol lose its shape and prove it was not the God. Second, it showed that the idol had no power to sustain itself, and therefore it could not do anything to save them. Thirdly, by grinding it to powder, Israel was shown what a futile effort their idol was. Fourthly, they would see their wealth of money, which they invested in this idol, being wasted upon the water, so they could never have it back. Lastly, by drinking the dust of their idol, knowing that it would be cast forth in the draught, they would see the ugliness of their sin.

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."

Moses asks Aaron: Under what threat from the people did you make this idol for them? Moses can hardly believe that Aaron actually made the idol for Israel, or that he would establish a feast to this idol. He reiterates to Aaron how great a sin idolatry is, and that Aaron is to blame for going along with the people's request. This reminds us of the application that it has to us, found in the NT scripture in: **Ga 1:10 ¶** "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." We cannot serve two masters, only one.

Aaron pleads mercy before Moses's anger, and he places the blame upon the people. Aaron also points out that the people did not know what had become of the man that brought them out of Egypt, which reminds us that they considered Moses to be a god (little g), and that they had already forgotten the Lord and his miraculous works. Less than forty days ago they had seen God descend upon the mount and heard him speak to them, from whom they fled away and asked Moses to be an intercessor for them. All the while that Moses is on the mount, the cloudy pillar and fire is still very visible to them, but all is cast aside to indulge in their lust.

Aaron declares that I told them to bring me your gold. When they gave it to me, I cast it into the fire and it came out a calf, which we know is a lie. We are told in **Ex 32:4 "And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf."** Aaron fashioned a mold of a calf and then graved it after it came out of the mold.

Aaron's actions remind us that the inherited sin nature of man has not changed since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. As Adam blamed God for giving him the woman who gave him to eat of the forbidden fruit: Eve blamed the serpent for deceiving her: so, Aaron blames the people for his sin. This is the way of the world, never take blame on yourself directly, but put it off on someone else: while the Children of God, when they understand they have sinned, will humble their hearts and fully accept blame for their own sins. They will do this with repentant hearts desiring God's forgiveness. May it ever be so with us, we pray in Jesus' name.

We would add that for those who commit sin, you are the only one to blame. Why do you say that? God tells us in **Jas 1:13-15; 13 ¶ "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."** Where is the origin of sin? God tells us that it is the heart of man, seen in **Mt 15:18-20; 18 "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20 These are the things which defile a man:**" Since God does not tempt man to sin, we see the origin of sin is in the heart of man. When the mind seizes upon the thought of sin and carries it into action, sin is consummated, and God was not involved in the process. You can't even blame it on the devil. Why? The devil may tempt you with some sin, but it is not sin until you make the decision to act upon it. That is your decision and yours only.

Praise God for the finished work of Jesus Christ, and the result of the new birth with the transformation of the heart as seen in **1Co 10:13-14; 13 "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. 14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry."** We see in our Exodus text that Israel did not flee from temptation, but rather, they turned their hearts wholly unto the sin of idolatry, by taking action to create an idol, and thereby bringing death upon themselves.

Wherefore, we have a great lesson to flee from idolatry, and all sinfulness. Because Jesus Christ came to earth in that prepared body, which was broken for our sins: because we are given new hearts in the new birth, which are filled with the fruits of the Spirit as seen in **Ga 5:22-24; 22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."** Praise God for the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the new creature, the saved by grace sinner. Hallelujah! Amen!