

# Do You Have a Golden Calf?

(A sermon about present-day idolatry!)

➤ = next PowerPoint

## ➤ Intro:

- **1 Cor. 10:1-11** Israel is an example to us, we shouldn't crave evil things

- illus.: vs. 7 idolatry, created golden calf, worshiped it, "people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play"

- Do you have a golden calf? – or have you gotten all idols out of your life

## ➤ Israel and the golden calf

- story: God had rescued Israel from Egyptian bondage

- by giving them a great leader who feared God – Moses

- by producing great signs that convinced Pharaoh to obey God's command

- last sign was death of the firstborn, but Israelites were saved by observing the 1<sup>st</sup> Passover

- by sending them out of Egypt with great wealth given to them by Egyptians upon their departure

- by miraculously parting the Red Sea, and they crossed on dry land

- by destroying the Egyptian army in the Red Sea

- **Ex. 32:1-6** Israel quickly turned to idolatry

- Aaron made them an idol, lied that it was the idol that brought them out of Egypt, condoned their lustful playing by which they satisfied fleshly pleasures

- **What is the problem, if we're engaged in idolatry?** – if we're putting God 2<sup>nd</sup> to anything
  - **Ex. 32:8 they turned aside from the way God commanded them**
  - **Col. 3:5 whenever we turn aside from God's command we become idolaters** – put other things before God
  - **What are some popular *golden calves* today?** – idols – things put before God
    - **all forms of fleshly pleasure that's put before God (1 Jn. 2:15-16)**
      - alcohol, drugs, money and pleasure it buys, pride, sinful movies and music, etc.
      - results: theft, lying, deception, illegal activities, etc.
    - **relationships put before God :**
      - spouse, children, parents, siblings, friends, boyfriend, girlfriend
      - results: adultery, fornication, homosexuality, etc.
    - **whenever we put something or someone first in our lives, behind God, we give them the devotion God deserves – it's idolatry**
- - **Ex. 32:6, 15-18 they were more interested in fulfilling sinful lusts than serving God**
  - **Heb. 11:25 Moses gave up the passing pleasures of sin** to obey and serve God – **opposite of Israel**
  - **illus.: young man who wanted to become famous before becoming a Christian**
    - **studied music in high school, dreaming of winning America Idol**
      - **was in all the musical and theater events possible**
      - **often missed church** to practice and perform
      - **decided he wanted to study music in college**, didn't think being a Christian would help
    - **went to college on a scholarship, all expenses paid, had incredible success**
      - **stopped going to church** all together
    - **auditioned for American Idol, got on the show, and won**
      - **still didn't go to church**, he was too busy
    - **after the Idol tour, he started his career**
      - **he was famous, and now he thought about becoming a Christian**, but he was too busy
      - **to become a Christian he'd have to stop** singing in clubs, and couldn't perform during church times, he wasn't willing to make the change
    - **one late night he was in a car accident and died**
      - **he opened his eyes in eternity, finding himself punished for his sins**
    - **he cried out in agony**
      - **"Why didn't I become a Christian? I always meant to do it!"**
    - **then a scary voice came from the depths of hell**
      - **"Because I tricked you!" Satan said. "Your idol was music and fame! That's how I got you to worship me! And now you are mine forever!"**
  - **God has to be first in our lives, or we're idolaters (Lk. 10:27; 1 Jn. 5:3)**
    - Who is first in your life?
    - Do you have any golden calves?
    - Are you an idolater, or is God first in your life?

- - **Ex. 32:7, 9 they corrupted themselves with sin because they were obstinate** (stiffnecked, KJV)
  - **obstinate:**
    - **perversely adhering to an opinion**, purpose, or course in spite of reason, arguments, or persuasion (Webster)
      - adhering to human opinions rather than obeying God
      - satisfying fleshly desires rather than satisfying God
    - **God had just brought them out of Egypt**, witnessed great miracles, and they **soon turned to sin**, too **impatient** to wait for Moses' return with the word of God – put themselves before God
  - **2 Ch. 30:7-8a we are stiff-necked (obstinate) if we do not yield to the Lord**
    - **whenever we turn away from God, we put other things before Him and become idolaters, because we're obstinate** (stiff-necked) – we want to do what we want, not what God wants
  
- - **Ex. 32:21-24, 35 they had a weak leader who gave into sinful men – Aaron – cf. Moses and Joshua weren't there**
  - **with a strong leader, many people followed God who would have turned to sin**
    - **but, Aaron was not strong**, he made the golden calf, and Israel sinned
    - **but, having a weak leader didn't excuse** the people of their sin, but didn't help them stay faithful
  - **they were not all sinful, but none had courage to lead**
    - **the priests later confessed they were still for the Lord, but were weak, and not good leaders**, because they did not rise up against sin without Moses
  - **Christians: some people are prone to sin, especially those who have come out of the world**
    - **they will often fall away unless** there is good leadership
    - **grounding of babies in Christ** must be one of our top priorities
  - **Gal. 6:1 spiritual men today must stand up and lead**
    - all that is necessary for a church to sink into apostasy is for holy men to do nothing
  
- - **Ex. 32:22-24 Aaron didn't take personal responsibility, but blamed it on the people and a freal accident**
  - **illus.: like Saul**, when didn't completely destroyed Amalekites, the king and best animals were brought back to the camp, Saul blamed the people rather than taking personal responsibility, dethroned by God
  - **Christians: as long as we don't take personal responsibility for our sins, and our failure to lead, we will never succeed as God's people**
  
- - **Ex. 32:25 (vs. 17-18) they were out of control**
  - **story: Aaron had let the people get out of control**
    - **he could have stopped it** with good leadership, like Moses
    - **people would have followed him** with he would had led
    - **people had a choice** as to whether to sin
  - **sin:**
    - **within just a few days, a group of people can get out of control** by giving themselves over to lustful desires
  - **self-control:**
    - **is a choice** – e.g., Israel
    - **we lose it when we turn ourselves over to sin** – make ourselves slaves to sin
  - **1 Cor. 9:24-27 (Gal. 5:23; 2 Pet. 1:6 – 2 Tim. 3:3)**
    - **we must exercise self-control (vs. 25), and discipline** our bodies (vs. 27)
  - **1 Tim. 3:4**
    - **as fathers and mothers, we must keep our children under control** – qualifications elders

problem: turn away from God's commands, want to fulfill lusts, obstinate, weak leadership, not take personal responsibility, out of control

- - **Ex. 32:26 they were not for the Lord**
  - **story: the Levites were for the Lord, but not the other tribes** – therefore, they were for sin
  - **Rom. 14:7-8 everything we do is for the Lord** – live, die (Col. 3:17)
  - **if we live and die for the Lord, we won't give ourselves over to sinful lusts, to serve them, as slaves**
  
- **What is God's reaction toward idolatry?**
  - **Ex. 32:10-11 anger burned against them, wanted to destroy them**
  
- - **Ex. 32:19-20, 27-29, 34-35 God / Moses punished the people**
  - **when we give ourselves over to sin, God punishes and chastises us** – this life, for eternity if we don't repent
  - **Col. 3:5b-6 whenever we turn away from God to sin, we become idolaters, God's wrath is upon us**
    - **Heb. 10:26-30 sin willfully**, terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of fire, severe punishment
    - **Heb. 6:6 sin and fall away**, crucify to ourselves Jesus, and put Him to open shame
    - **Heb. 12:29 our God is a consuming fire**
  - **when we put God 2<sup>nd</sup> to anything or anyone**, His anger burns against us, and we have nothing to look forward to except severe punishment
    - **but if we repent. . . .**

### Summary / Inv.

- **review:** if we're engaged in idolatry – problem / solution
  - **Do you have a golden calf? If so, tear it down and serve God!**
  
- **Ex. 32:30-33**
  - **solution:** repent and correct the problems, beseech God for forgiveness
  
- **if you're not a faithful Christian**, God isn't 1<sup>st</sup> in your life, and you have at least one idol
  - **you know the solution:** repent, beseech God for forgiveness – live for the Lord
  - **inv.:**