### Exodus

## Chapter 32

1[Well, after considerable time had passed] and the people saw that Moses hadn’t returned from the Mountain, they went to Aaron and said:  
  
 ‘[We want you to] make gods for us to lead us, because we don’t know what’s become of this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt.’  
  
2So Aaron told them:  
  
 ‘I want you to take all the gold earrings that your wives and daughters wear in their ears, and bring them to me.’  
  
3Then everyone took off their gold earrings and brought them to Aaron, 4and he took them from their hands, [had] them melted, and then the gold was carved into [the shape of] a calf.  
  
And he said:  
  
 ‘O IsraEl,  
  
 ‘This is your God who carried you out of the land of Egypt.’  
  
5And after he saw it, Aaron had an altar built next to it.  
  
Then Aaron proclaimed:  
  
 ‘Tomorrow [we’ll hold] a feast to the Lord.’  
  
6So he got up early the next morning and he offered whole burnt sacrifices and a peace offering [upon the altar]. Then the people sat down to eat and drink, and thereafter they got up to play.  
  
7Well at that, the Lord told Moses:  
  
 ‘Hurry and go down [the mountain], because the people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt are acting lawlessly!  
  
 8‘Notice how quickly they’ve left the ways that you’ve shown them… For now they’ve made themselves a calf to worship, and they’ve even offered sacrifices to it, saying:  
  
 9‘O IsraEl, this is your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt!’  
  
 10‘So, leave Me now, for I’m so angry with them that I’ll reject them and make a great nation of you!’  
  
11But Moses started begging the Lord. He said:  
  
 ‘O Jehovah,  
  
 ‘Why are you so angry with the people whom You brought out of the land of Egypt with Your mighty arm and with so much power?  
  
 12‘Don’t allow the Egyptians to say:  
  
 ‘He wickedly took them away to kill them in the Mountains and to wipe them off of the land!’  
  
 ‘Hold back Your rage and show mercy on the sins of Your people... 13Remember Your servants AbraHam, IsaAc, and Jacob, and the [oath] that You made to them when You swore by Your Name, saying:  
  
 ‘I will cause your offspring to increase [in number] so much that [they’ll become] like the stars in the skies!’  
  
 ‘And [remember the promise that You made] to give them all of this land as theirs throughout the ages.’  
  
14Well, that’s how Jehovah was moved to [keep them] as His people.  
  
  
15Then Moses turned and went down the Mountain carrying the two Tablets of Proofs in his hands... They were tablets of stone that were inscribed on both sides, 16and they were the works and writings of God.  
  
17Well, when JoShua heard the voices of people shouting, he said to Moses:  
  
 ‘That’s the sound of a war in the camp!’  
  
18But [Moses] replied:  
  
 ‘It isn’t the sound of people going to battle or the sound of defeat... What I hear is the sound of a lot of [partying].’  
  
19And when he got close to the camp, he saw the calf and the dancing, and Moses became so angry that he threw the two tablets from his hands and broke them into pieces at the base of the Mountain!  
  
20Then he took the calf that they’d made and had it melted and ground into dust, and he put it into some water and made the children of IsraEl drink it.  
  
21And after that, Moses asked Aaron:  
  
 ‘What have these people done to you?!  
  
 ‘Why have you made them [guilty of] such a great sin?’  
  
22And Aaron replied:  
  
 ‘Don’t be angry, lord; for you know how troublesome these people are! 23They told me:  
  
 ‘[We want you to] make gods for us to lead us, because we don’t know what’s become of this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt!’  
  
 24‘So I said:  
  
 ‘If anyone has gold ornaments, take them off.’  
  
 ‘Then they gave them to me and I threw them into the fire, and out came this calf!’  
  
25Well, Moses realized that the people were divided, and Aaron was responsible… Which was something that would make their enemies very happy.  
  
26So Moses went to the entrance of the camp and shouted:  
  
 ‘Who is on Jehovah’s side? [May those who are], come here to me!’  
  
Well, all the sons of Levi came to him, 27and he told them:  
  
 ‘This is what Jehovah, the God of IsraEl, has declared:  
  
 ‘Everyone must [tie on] his sword and go through the camp from gate to gate, and each of you must kill [your rebellious] brothers and neighbors, starting with those who are the nearest to you!’  
  
28So the sons of Levi did just as Moses had told them, and 3,000 people fell that day.  
  
29Then Moses said:  
  
 ‘You are to be praised, because you’ve all raised your hands before Jehovah [and struck down] your own sons and your own brothers!’  
  
  
30Then the next morning, Moses spoke to the people and said:  
  
 ‘You’ve committed a great sin! So, now I must go up to God and pay for your sins!’  
  
31Therefore, Moses returned to Jehovah and said:  
  
 ‘I’ve [come to] beg You, O Lord; because these people are guilty of a great sin by making a god of gold.  
  
 32‘So now, [please] forgive their sins. But if You choose not to; then, also erase my name from the scroll that You’ve written.’  
  
33But the Lord told Moses:  
  
 ‘I’m going to erase [the names] from My scroll of all those who’ve sinned against Me!  
  
 34‘Now, go and lead these people to the place that I told you about when I said:  
  
 ‘{Look!} My messenger will travel before you.’  
  
 ‘However, I’m also going to visit them and [punish] them for their sins.’  
  
35So thereafter, Jehovah struck the people for having Aaron make the calf.