



“Open Church – Open Bible”

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Sunday Church School

November 15, 2020

“God Judges The Sin” – Exodus 32: 25-35

Golden Text: Exodus 32:33

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“Exodus 32:25-35”

²⁵ Now when Moses saw that the people were unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to *their* shame among their enemies),

²⁶ then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, "Whoever is on the LORD'S side--*come* to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him.

²⁷ And 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 according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day.

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“Exodus 32:25-35”

²⁹ Then Moses said, "Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother."

³⁰ Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."

³¹ Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Oh, 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--but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written."

³³ And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.

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³⁴ Now therefore, go, lead the people to *the place* of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin."

³⁵ So the LORD plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made.

People who serve in government, elected or otherwise, are often called public servants.

- A very appropriate term since their job is to serve the public
- Too often we find public servant serving themselves more than the public
- Some public servants become cynical and start viewing their job as just a means of earning a paycheck.
- To be honest, serving people is not easy. It means putting up with and sometimes confronting angry, unreasonable, selfish people.

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And it often means that no matter what the leaders do, half there will be people who dislikes what is going on it and maybe even hate the leaders themselves.

Like all leaders, Moses was not perfect, but he was a selfless leader of a selfish people, and as such there he serves as good model for all leaders

LESSON OUTLINE (I) SWIFT JUDGMENT—Ex. 32:25-29 (II) GODLY INTERCESSION—Ex. 32:30-32 (III) DIVINE DECLARATION—Ex. 32:33-35

(I) SWIFT JUDGMENT—Ex. 32:25-29

We closed our lesson last week evidencing Moses return from his mountaintop experience with God with the “tablets of the Testimony” in hand

God had notified him what was happening in the camp of Israel, and upon entering the camp he saw it for himself -- a tumultuous scene of people dancing in delight before a golden idol.

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➤ KJV says they were **“naked,”** meaning either **unarmed and defenseless, ashamed** from a sense of guilt, or **literally unclothed** like the Egyptians

While they should have been watchful and guarded against an incursion of the Camp by the Amalekites, they were engaged in raucous behavior

Moses equated their behavior as disloyalty to God, particularly considering all He had done for them; and was still doing.

Angrily he broke the stone tablets containing God’s law, symbolizing the nation’s breaking of their covenant with the Lord.

- He immediately called for a decision – *“Whoever is on the Lord’s side come to me”*
- The zeal and courage of Moses was astonishing, considering he opposed an intoxicated mob.
- The people were separated into two divisions, and those who were the boldest and most obstinate in vindicating their idolatry were put to death, while the rest, who withdrew in shame or sorrow, were spared

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The result of the challenge to immorality resulted in the “sons of Levi” (his own tribe) gathering themselves together with him.

- This would call for Aaron to make a declaration of allegiance to God (Deut. 9:20)
- How embarrassed Aaron must have been having to admit complicity in the sin
- The great lesson here is that when you have one person willing to stand boldly for the Lord, there is possibility others will join in with him/her.

The Levites were commanded to “go through the camp and kill any who ***persisted in idolatry***; thus 3000 Israelites were killed by sword and others would be afflicted by means of a plague (v. 35).

This level of punishment may seem unduly harsh, and certainly we are not called to do anything like this today.

But we must keep several things in mind:

- 1) This was not Moses idea but was the command of the Lord (v 27)

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- This relieves the moral issue, since God is holy and all He does and commands is just, right, and holy (Lev. 11:44; Ps. 145:17).
- 2) Second, the idolaters could not be left in Israel to influence others.
 - If idolatry was permitted to continue, others would turn from saving truth to condemning falsehood
 - Since Israel was the repository of God’s saving truth, allowing the idolatry to continue might have affected the potential for eternal life of countless future generations of Israelites and Gentiles alike.
- 3) Third, the idolaters had condemned themselves, having previously agreed to the covenant, which prohibited worshipping other gods (Ex. 22:20).

In V 29 Moses told the Levites “Ye have consecrated yourselves today” indicating the Levites, distinguished themselves by their zeal for the honor of God and their conduct in carrying out God’s orders.

- Their obedience became the reason they were appointed to a high and honorable office in the service of the sanctuary.

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II. GODLY INTERCESSION—Ex. 32:30-32

- A frequently asked question is: Why were only three thousand killed when the whole nation was held accountable for the sin (V 30)?
 - It is likely the three thousand represented those who were directly involved in the idolatry.
- Moses labored to show the people the heinous nature of their sin, and to bring them to repentance.
 - He said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin
 - But not content with that, he hastened to earnestly intercede for them
- Notice the warmth of affection he evinced for his brethren!
 - blot me ... out of thy book—an allusion to the registering of the living, and erasing the names of those who die.
 - He was he animated with the true spirit of a patriot, when he professed his willingness to die for them.
 - But Christ actually died for His people (Rom 5:8)

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III. DIVINE DECLARATION—Ex. 32:33-35

- When Moses was informed of the idolatry in Israel’s camp while he was still on the mountain, he had interceded for the people with the Lord, who threatened to destroy the whole nation and start over with him (V. 9-14).
- Moses had argued forcefully that the Lord must spare the people in order to keep His promises and maintain His reputation.
- This was undoubtedly the very response God desired from Moses. Consequently, He withdrew His threat, and the people were spared
- The fact that God held back from destroying the nation did not suggest that there would be no consequences for their rebellion.
- Moses feared more divine judgment would come, and his response was again to intercede with the Lord for His people.
- Moses told the people he would again make his way back up to the Lord; he would ascend the mountain once more on behalf of the nation.
- There he would seek to “make an atonement” for their sin.

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Back on the mountain, forgiveness was sought (Ex. 32:32) and Moses asked the Lord to forgive the people.

The earnestness of his plea is evident in the offer he made: “If not, blot me ... out of thy book.”

Many take this to be a reference to the “book of life,” which is mentioned in Philippians 4:3 and several times in the book of Revelation (3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27).

If this is what Moses was referring to, he was offering to be condemned eternally (blotted out of the book) if it meant Israel would be spared

Others have taken this book to simply be “relating to temporal life and not eternal life. To be blotted out of this book because of sin indicated an untimely death.

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The Lord’s answer to Moses was straightforward: “Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.”

This was essentially a statement of the divine principle of justice; namely, that each person is responsible for his or her own sins and will suffer the just punishment for them.

While God could not accept Moses’ selfless offer to be a substitute, his prayer for the people’s forgiveness was answered.

Along with His mercy, however, however, God would also bring discipline. He declared that He would “visit their sin upon them.”

We know neither the nature nor the extent of this plague, but at least some people suffered from it and presumably died.

- This plague was intended to warn against entertaining idolatrous ideas



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“ADVANCE YOUR KNOWLEDGE”



1. What resulted from the Israelites' out-of-control behavior?
2. What tribe stood with Moses against the idolaters?
3. Why did the Lord demand that the idolaters be killed?
4. What blessing did God bestow on the Levites?
5. Why did Moses intercede for the people after the idolaters were killed?
What offer did Moses make to the Lord?
6. What book did Moses refer to, and what did being blotted out of the book mean?
7. How did the Lord answer Moses' plea on behalf of the people? How did the Lord express His mercy to Israel?

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LESSON DEVELOPMENT

TODAY’S AIM

Facts: to see how God judged Israel’s sin.

Principle: to know that God judge sin and that He alone sees it as it really is

Application: to realize that God sees and judges our sin, and to thank Him for His priceless gift of salvation in Christ.

Teaching about judgment on sin is difficult because our fallen human nature colors our viewpoint on the subject.

- This lesson raises the indebtedness man has to God – *what we ought to do*

Mankind cannot make reparations for its own sin, because the source of the payment would come from a flawed benefactor.

- Our sin can only be paid for by the grace of God on the merits of Christ

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