

The Golden Calf

Exodus 32

by Don Falkos

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The people of Israel said to Aaron, "Moses is gone. Make us a god who will lead us." They gave him their gold jewelry. Aaron melted it down and cast an idol in the shape of a calf. The people said, "This is the god who brought us out of Egypt!" They made sacrifices to the golden calf. Then they ate and drank and indulged in pagan revelry.

On Mount Sinai, God said to Moses, "Your people have made an idol and worshiped it and sacrificed to it. They are stubborn and rebellious. Now stand aside as I destroy them. Then, in their place, I will make you into a great nation."

But Moses pleaded, "Lord, don't be so angry with your people. Remember your covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." So the Lord withdrew the threat and did not destroy the people of Israel.

Moses went down the mountain carrying the two stone tablets God had given him. He saw the golden calf and the people carousing. He was so angry he threw the tablets to the ground, smashing them to pieces. He blamed Aaron who said, "Don't be angry with me. The people said, 'Make us a god.' They gave me their gold jewelry; I threw it into the fire; and out stepped this calf!"

Moses melted the golden calf, ground the gold to powder, put it in water, and made the people drink it.

The Israelites were completely out of control. Moses called for those who were loyal to the Lord, and the Levites joined him. God commanded them to kill anyone who refused to acknowledge the Lord, and that day many people died.