

"WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?"

BIBLE TEXT: Exodus 24:12-18; 31:18; 32:1-35

LESSON 67 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Exodus 24:12-18

¹² And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.

¹³ And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God.

¹⁴ And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur *are* with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them.

¹⁵ And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount.

¹⁶ And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

¹⁷ And the sight of the glory of the LORD *was* like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

¹⁸ And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

Exodus 31:18

¹⁸ And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

Exodus 32:1-35

¹ And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, 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.

² And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which *are* in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring *them* unto me.

³ And all the people brake off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Israel Before Mount Sinai

The first time Moses returned from the mount with instructions from God for the Israelites to purify themselves for three days, and then come near to listen to the Lord speaking to them, they had willingly agreed to obey God in all things. Their coming out of Egypt was a type of salvation, leaving the things of the world; their passing through the Red Sea was a type of water baptism. But there is more for the children of God after they are saved. God wants them to draw near and hear His commandments; to walk with Him and obey Him in all things. The Children of Israel at Sinai was a type of sanctification; and think how much the Lord would have done for them if they had come near to Him and had fulfilled His will! They began to do God's will, and they outwardly cleansed themselves; but when they heard the commandments of God (**Deuteronomy 5:22** ²² *These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me*) they drew back: "For they could not endure that which was commanded" (Hebrews 12:20).

Many people today start in the Christian way; but when they learn what it means to live a holy life before God they draw back, and God has no pleasure in them. The light they had becomes darkness to them.

The Law Written on Stone

God wanted to give the Ten Commandments to the Israelites in such a way that they would not be forgotten nor erased. He called Moses and Joshua to come into the mount, and with His finger He wrote the commandments on tables of stone. Joshua was to be the leader of Israel after Moses died, so it was necessary that he, too, draw near to God and hear His words.

The glory of the Lord covered the mountain for six days. What a holy thrill it must have been to Moses and Joshua, who had the Spirit of God in them; but to the Children of Israel who were watching from afar, **it** was like a "devouring fire." People who do not have the love of God in their hearts cannot understand the things of the Spirit, and they fear the supernatural things of God. But how sweet to the true Christian is the working of the Spirit of God in their midst!

On the seventh day that Moses and Joshua were in the mount, God began to speak. Moses had learned to wait upon the Lord, and he did **not** grow impatient. We have many promises of God to believe, and we should not lose faith because God sometimes delays His answers. The greatest promise is that of our Lord's return to earth. He has tarried a long time, but His children are waiting with eager expectation for His coming, never doubting the reality of that great day.

Communion with God

Nothing is said about Moses' eating anything during the forty days he was in the mount. We believe he was so enthralled by the glory of **God** that he never thought about physical food. When God lays a burden of prayer upon His people to pray

brought *them* unto Aaron.

⁴ And he received *them* at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

⁵ And when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow *is* a feast to the LORD.

⁶ And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

⁷ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves*:

⁸ They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

⁹ And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it *is* a stiffnecked people:

¹⁰ Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

¹¹ And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?

¹² Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.

¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit *it* for ever.

¹⁴ And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

¹⁵ And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony *were* in his hand: the tables *were* written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other *were* they written.

¹⁶ And the tables *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God,

earnestly for a certain thing they sometimes forget their meals. When one prays diligently he gets into close communion with the Lord, which sets him apart for a time from the things about him. The more a person consecrates his life the easier it is to get into that close communion with God. The more we pray, the more we want to pray. When once a person feels that nearness to the Savior, he feels something is missing from his life when he neglects prayer. When through neglect he loses the urge to pray, the Spirit of God is grieved; and if he continues in that way, he will soon be as the dry heath in the desert, that inhabits the parched places in the wilderness (**Jeremiah 17:6** ⁶ For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited).

Moses left Aaron and Hur in charge of the congregation when **he** went to commune with God. They were to answer the people's questions and judge in matters of controversy.

The People's Desire for Another God

Can you imagine what their first problem was? They wanted another god. The first commandment God had given them had been that they should have no other gods before Him, and they should make no image to bow down to. Already they were disobeying His Word.

The Scriptures state that the people worshiped the Lord and bowed down to the calf. The glory of God that they had beheld on the smoking mountain had diminished in their imagination to nothing more than a golden calf. They said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

Let us review some of the things God had done for them during the past four months. After God had struck the Egyptians with terrible plagues which the magicians were powerless to remove or to duplicate, He had opened the Red Sea so the Israelites could walk through on dry land. When the Amalekites came against them in battle God wrought a marvelous victory for Israel through Joshua at the head of the army and Moses on the hill with Aaron and Hur interceding with the Lord. When they were hungry God had given them quails and manna to eat, (and they were still eating the manna which God provided every day). Water had been provided for them from the dry rock when they were thirsty. All these things the Israelites knew, yet they could say in their spiritual blindness; "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

We remember that the Egyptians had worshiped the cow; but when God's judgments struck their land, the cattle died. None of their gods had any power to help them. The Children of Israel should have learned a lesson from that which they would not soon forget.

We cannot understand such base ingratitude and lack of faith, but how many people today are just as blind to the wonders of God's Gospel! He works miracles in transforming the sinner into a saint, in healing sick bodies, and in countless other ways manifesting Himself. Yet many people fail to see any reality in the religion of the Bible.

God's Divine Wrath

God was so displeased with the people (can you blame Him?) that He was ready to destroy the whole nation. He promised to raise up a new nation from the descendants of Moses, because He was pleased with the meekness and obedience of Moses.

But Moses was not seeking for honor and wealth for himself. He himself was irritated by the actions of his followers, but he wanted the name of God to be glorified. If the Israelites should all die now, the Egyptians could say that God had not had power to take them into the Promised Land, and for that reason had let them perish in the wilderness. Moses wanted the whole

graven upon the tables.

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.

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*.

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.

²⁵ And when Moses saw that the people *were* naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto *their* shame among their enemies:)

²⁶ Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who *is* on the LORD'S side? *let him come* unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.

²⁷ And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, *and* go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.

²⁸ And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.

²⁹ For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

world to know the power of God, so he pled with Him for forgiveness for the Israelites. What a wonderful man Moses was to love those sinful people enough to beg God to spare their lives!

Jesus did even more for us. The Scripture tells us that Jesus died for His enemies. God cannot look upon any sin in any way other than in wrath, but Jesus shed His Blood that the Blood would cover our sins and hide them from the Father. Jesus did not die for His own sins — He never committed any. He went through all His suffering for your sins and mine.

The Power of Intercession

Think of the power Moses had in prayer to God. He reminded God of the promises He had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that their seed should inherit the land of Canaan. Moses begged the Lord to remember those promises, and be merciful to sinning Israel.

When we come to God, we have a right to remind Him of His promises. If we study the Word of God carefully we know what those promises are, and we can pray in faith, knowing He will fulfill His Word. Is it not wonderful that we humble creatures of God's hands can pray to Him in a way that brings an answer for our good?

Sins Revealed

God told Moses what the people were doing in his absence — the terrible sins they were committing. God lets His ministers know when sin creeps into their congregation. He knows everything; no sins are hid from the eye of God; and it will not do anyone any good to try to pray if he is not willing to forsake his sins. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28: 13)

When Moses and Joshua came down from the mountain they heard the noise of singing as the people danced about the golden calf. Moses was so angry with the Israelites because they were dishonoring God that he threw to the ground the tables of stone upon which God had written the Ten Commandments — and they broke, just as the Children of Israel had broken the commandments by their actions.

Moses took the golden calf and ground it to powder. He scattered the dust on the water and made the people drink it. The calf did not even have power to defend itself, much less would it have had power to bring the Israelites out of Egypt.

Aaron tried to excuse himself for his part in the sin. He said the people had given him gold; and after he had thrown it into the fire to melt out came the calf. But that was not the truth, because the Scripture states that he "fashioned it with a graving tool."

Moses wondered if there were any good people left among his followers. He had come down from the mountain with the blessings of God to give them, but they had proved they did not deserve them; so the blessings had been changed into judgments.

Moses stood before the people and asked them if there were any of them who would take their stand for God. All the sons of Levi came over on the Lord's side. That was not very many compared with that great company of people to whom the question was put. God used them to bring punishment upon the offenders; and 3000 died that day, by the edge of the sword of the Levites.

Who is on the Lord's side today? Not many people are willing to take their stand on the side of the lowly Nazarene; not many are willing to suffer a little here that they might reign with Christ when He comes in His glory. If people could only realize how much more important eternal life is than the little time we spend here on earth, they would run to the foot of the Cross and repent and call upon the Savior for mercy.

Moses returned to God and begged that the sins of the people should

³⁰ And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.

³¹ And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.

³² Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

³³ And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.

³⁴ Therefore now go, lead the people unto *the place* of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them.

³⁵ And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

be forgiven. He admitted that they had sinned a great sin, but he wanted the mercy of God to cover it. If God would not forgive the people, Moses was willing that his part should be taken out of the Book of Life. But that was not God's way. He said, "Whosoever hath sinned against me. Him will I blot out of my book." Moses had not sinned; why should he suffer? Moses made an atonement (which meant a sacrifice by shedding blood) for the sins of the people; and God relented. He told Moses to go ahead and lead the people to the Promised Land. However, God plagued them because they had made the golden calf and had worshiped it.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Where is the camp of Israel at the time of this lesson?
- 2 Why were the people afraid of God?
- 3 Who went into the mountain with Moses? Why?
- 4 What did the people do while Moses was gone?
- 5 How were they punished for their sins?
- 6 Why did God have mercy on them?
- 7 Who came over on the Lord's side?