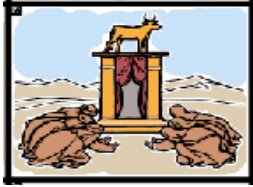


Story 19



The Golden Calf

Exodus 32:1-35; 34:1-28

The Bridge: When God called Moses to the mountain to give him the stone tablet, he was gone so long the people began to think that he was not coming back. They said, "...Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him" (Exodus 32:1).

The Story:

- In a weak moment, the people forgot that it was the One True God who delivered them from Egypt. They wanted a god they could see. In his weakness, Aaron allowed the Israelites to bring him their gold rings and made a golden calf. He then built an altar around it for the people to worship a god they could see (Exodus 32:2-5). The people worshipped the calf by dancing and singing around it (Exodus 32:26).
- While Moses was still on the mountain meeting with God, God told Moses, "...Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves*. "They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshipped it and have sacrificed to it and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!'" (Exodus 32:7-8).
- God was prepared to destroy them and make a new nation through Moses (Exodus 32:10). Moses reminded God, "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit *it* forever.'" So the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people" (Exodus 32:13-14).
- Moses and his helper Joshua came down from the mountain and heard the singing and saw the people dancing around the altar with the golden calf. In anger, Moses threw down the tablets with the commandments and they broke into pieces (Exodus 32:15-19). Moses took the gold idol, burned it and ground it into dust, scattered it over the surface of the water, and made the people drink it to show them what God thought of golden idols. Those who worshipped the golden calf were killed (Exodus 32:20-28).
- Later, Moses went back to the mountain and God gave him new tablets on which to write His laws (Exodus 34:1-28).



Why did the people make a golden calf?