

"WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?"

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

LESSON 67 Senior 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:

I Moses Called into the Mount

- 1 Moses is told he will receive the tables of stone written by the finger of God, Exodus 24:12; 31:18
- 2 Moses takes Joshua with him to the Mount of God, Exodus 24:13
- 3 Aaron and Hur are to be shepherds of the flock during Moses' absence, Exodus 24:14;
Acts 20:28 ²⁸Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.
- 4 The glory of the Lord abides on the top of the mount six days, Exodus 24:16, 17
- 5 Moses goes into the presence of God, Exodus 24:18

II The Return of Moses Delayed

- 1 The people become impatient and demand Aaron to make them gods to go before them, Exodus 32:1
- 2 Aaron fashions a golden calf, Exodus 32:2-4
- 3 The people offer sacrifices, Exodus 32:5, 6

III Moses Ordered Down from the Mount by the Lord

- 1 The people have corrupted themselves, Exodus 32:7, 8, 17-25
- 2 Moses breaks the two tables of stone, Exodus 32:15, 16, 19;
Deuteronomy 9:16-17 ¹⁶ And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against the LORD your God, *and* had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the LORD had commanded you.
¹⁷ And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes.

IV Moses in the Gate

- 1 Moses sends forth the challenge, "Who is on the LORD'S side?" Exodus 32:26;
1 Kings 18:21 ²¹ And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word.
- 2 The sons of Levi respond and are told to consecrate themselves, Exodus 32:26-29
- 3 The Lord wants to destroy the people and make Moses the head of a nation, Exodus 32:10
- 4 Moses intercedes in their behalf, Exodus 32:11-13, 31, 32;
Romans 9:3 ³ For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:
Isaiah 53:12 ¹² Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.
- 5 "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book," Exodus 32:33;
Ezekiel 18:4 ⁴ Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.
- 6 The wages of sin is death, Exodus 32:28, 34, 35;
Romans 6:23 ²³ For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

NOTES:

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,

The Written Law

Step by step the Lord led His people out of Egypt, proving to the Egyptians as well as to His own people that He is the true and living God. He brought them up to Mount Sinai to enter into a holy covenant with them. They had seen the judgments of the Lord upon the Egyptians; and when the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai in a thick cloud, and the mountain trembled and the trumpet sounded louder and louder and the lightning flashed, the people drew back and said to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Exodus 20:19). How it must have grieved the Lord to see His own people draw back (**Hebrews 10:38** ³⁸ Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him)! But His mercy was still extended, and He called Moses into the mount to give him His laws and statutes.

Although the mount trembled and quaked and burned with fire, Moses answered God's call and went up into the midst of the cloud where God dwelt. "And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake" (Hebrews 12:21). Moses trusted God and with courage obeyed the Lord in spite of fear. God preserved Moses although for forty days and nights he neither ate bread nor drank water (**Deuteronomy 9:9** ⁹ When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, *even* the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water). After Jesus had fasted the same length of time He resisted Satan with the words, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Moses was on the mount to receive the Word of God; and, like Job, he considered it "more" than his "necessary food."

The Lord had given the Law to Moses orally, and Israel had promised to obey it; but the Lord called Moses into the mountain again that He might give them the written Word. We can see the wisdom of the Lord in wanting them to have the written Word. They could easily have perverted the spoken Word but not so the written Word. The Lord has always been jealous for His Word. Psalm 138:2 declares, "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."

The Broken Law

We can readily account for the indignation of Moses at seeing Israel so soon turning back to idolatry. Paul, in his day, marvelled that the Galatians were so soon removed from the grace of Christ to another gospel (**Galatians 1:6** ⁶ I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel). Israel had broken their covenant with God. When a covenant, or contract, is broken by one party, the other party is no longer obligated to fulfill his part of the contract. Moses broke the tables of stone, showing that God was no longer responsible for His part of the Covenant. God never goes back on His Word, but when men fail to keep their covenant, God is necessarily hindered from fulfilling His part.

Shepherds

Aaron and Hur were given the responsible position of under shepherds. In place of being a true shepherd, Aaron played the part of a politician — he said that the people wanted gods to go before them. Aaron, like the hireling "whose own the sheep are not," let the people have their own way. Moses was uncompromising; and, like the true Shepherd, was willing to give

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.

his life for the people. If the Lord cannot trust us with small things, how can He commit to us the true riches?

Moses' Challenge to Israel

The boldness with which Moses stood in the gate and challenged all Israel is characteristic of a true prophet filled with the Spirit of God. The challenge is to a rebellious people — a people who had seen miracles with their own eyes and should have been willing to trust the Lord. Moses stood alone and cried out, "Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me" (Exodus 32:26).

The little tribe of Levi stepped out. It took courage on their part to step out from among that multitude of people and walk out to the gate where Moses was. It also takes courage on the part of a sinner to step out from a large congregation and walk down the aisle and bow at an altar of prayer. A Christian, too, is a man of courage. He stands for the right in the face of sneers and derision. He is willing to take his stand by the Word of God even though his own father or mother may condemn him or make light of his ways. Jesus said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37). It was against their own brother, companion, and neighbour, that the tribe of Levi had to take their stand. It will take that which lies closest to the heart to make one a follower of Christ. Great is the reward of those who have the courage to take their stand for God.

When the tribe of Levi came out on the Lord's side, how quickly Moses' attitude changed from that of challenge to encouragement. He exhorted them to consecrate their lives to the Lord that He might bestow a blessing upon them. Sometimes we are called upon to consecrate to do hard things; but with the call God gives strength to perform the task, and follows it with a blessing.

Moses an Intercessor

Standing before the people, Moses exhibited the characteristics of a true soldier and leader, but when he came into the presence of God he humbled himself and fell on his face and cried out, "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold" — confessing just what they had done. Some people try to find mercy without confessing their sins. The Word says that whoso confesseth and forsaketh shall have mercy. There was no greater sin that Israel could have committed than to turn from the living God to worship idols. The very first commandment says. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3).

Israel had sinned, but Moses pled for mercy: "If thou wilt forgive their sin — ; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Exodus 32:32). The Lord's answer is one of justice: "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Exodus 32:33). If it had not been for Moses' power to prevail with God, the Children of Israel would have been annihilated. Moses later told Israel, "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me" (Deuteronomy 18:15). We have that Prophet as our Advocate with the Father today, Jesus Christ the righteous.

QUESTIONS

- 1 By whom were the tables of stone engraved?
- 2 How long did Moses stay in the mount?
- 3 Who was left in charge of Israel while Moses was away?
- 4 How was the glory of the Lord manifested to Israel?

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.

- 5 Find a verse which describes God's attitude toward Aaron at this time.
- 6 What were the five ways in which Israel had corrupted themselves?
- 7 What did the Lord want to do to Israel?
- 8 What points did Moses use in his intercession for Israel?
- 9 Did Aaron admit the responsibility for what had happened?
- 10 Who responded to Moses' call, "Who is on the LORD'S side?"
- 11 What were they told to do?
- 12 What spiritual lesson can you gain from their actions?