



## Lesson 10

# The Golden Calf

*Exodus 24:12-18; 32:1-34; 33:4-6;*

*34:1-10, 28*



## Exodus 20:3-17 – The Ten Commandments

### First

<sup>3</sup>“You shall have no other gods before<sup>[b]</sup> me.

<sup>4</sup>“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup>You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>6</sup>but showing steadfast love to thousands<sup>[c]</sup> of those who love me and keep my commandments.

## Two “Tables” of the Law

*And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. <sup>Commandments 1-3</sup>*

*And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>Commandments 4-10</sup> (Matthew 22:35-39).*

## Exodus 24:12-18

<sup>3</sup> Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. **And all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do.”** <sup>4</sup> And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>5</sup> And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. <sup>7</sup> Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.” <sup>8</sup> And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.” . . . The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.” <sup>13</sup> So Moses rose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. <sup>14</sup> And he said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you. Whoever has a dispute, let him go to them.” <sup>15</sup> Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. <sup>16</sup> The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. <sup>17</sup> Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. <sup>18</sup> Moses entered

the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

## Exodus 32:1-33:6

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, “Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” <sup>2</sup> So Aaron said to them, “Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” <sup>3</sup> So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup> And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!” (note: the foolishness of idolatry, cf. Isaiah 44) <sup>5</sup> When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD.” <sup>6</sup> And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

<sup>7</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, “Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. <sup>8</sup> They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’” <sup>9</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. <sup>10</sup> Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you.”

<sup>11</sup> But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, “O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a

mighty hand? <sup>12</sup> Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. <sup>13</sup> Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.’” <sup>14</sup> And the LORD relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.

### Moses as Mediator and type of Christ

Deuteronomy 18:15

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—

1 Timothy 2:5

<sup>5</sup> For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man<sup>[a]</sup> Christ Jesus,

<sup>15</sup> Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets that were written on both sides; on the front and on the back they were written. <sup>16</sup> The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets. <sup>17</sup> When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “There is a noise of war in the camp.” <sup>18</sup> But he said, “It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing that I hear.” <sup>19</sup> And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. <sup>20</sup> He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it.

<sup>21</sup> And Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?” <sup>22</sup> And Aaron said, “Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people,

that they are set on evil. <sup>23</sup> For they said to me, ‘Make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ <sup>24</sup> So I said to them, ‘Let any who have gold take it off.’ So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.”

<sup>25</sup> And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies), <sup>26</sup> then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, “Who is on the LORD's side? Come to me.” And all the sons of Levi gathered around him. <sup>27</sup> And he said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.’” <sup>28</sup> And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell. <sup>29</sup> And Moses said, “Today you have been ordained for the service of the LORD, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day.”

<sup>30</sup> The next day Moses said to the people, “You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” <sup>31</sup> So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. <sup>32</sup> But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.” <sup>33</sup> But the LORD said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book. <sup>34</sup> But now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.”

<sup>35</sup> Then the LORD sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf, the one that Aaron made.

**33** The LORD said to Moses, “Depart; go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your offspring I will give it.’ <sup>2</sup> I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. <sup>3</sup> Go up to a

land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.”

<sup>4</sup>When the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. <sup>5</sup>For the LORD had said to Moses, “Say to the people of Israel, ‘You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you.’” <sup>6</sup>Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward.

### **Idolatry – Open**

#### **Isaiah 42:8**

<sup>8</sup>I am the LORD; that is my name;  
my glory I give to no other,  
nor my praise to carved idols.

#### **John 5:23**

<sup>23</sup>that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

### **Idolatry – Secret**

#### **Matthew 10:37**

<sup>37</sup>Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

#### **Matthew 6:24**

<sup>24</sup>“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

#### **Psalms 62:10**

if riches increase, set not your heart on them.

#### **Proverbs 3:5**

<sup>5</sup>Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
and do not lean on your own understanding.

## 1 John 2:15

<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

## Exodus 33:14-15

And [the LORD] said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." <sup>15</sup> And [Moses] said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.

## Exodus 34:1-28

The LORD said to Moses, "Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. <sup>2</sup> Be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me on the top of the mountain. <sup>3</sup> No one shall come up with you, and let no one be seen throughout all the mountain. Let no flocks or herds graze opposite that mountain." <sup>4</sup> So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first. And he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand two tablets of stone. <sup>5</sup> The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." <sup>8</sup> And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. <sup>9</sup> And he said, "If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance." (confession of sins)

<sup>10</sup> And he said, "Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you. . . . (absolution)



<sup>11</sup> “Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. <sup>12</sup> Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. <sup>13</sup> You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim <sup>14</sup> (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), <sup>15</sup> lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, <sup>16</sup> and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods.

<sup>17</sup> “You shall not make for yourself any gods of cast metal.

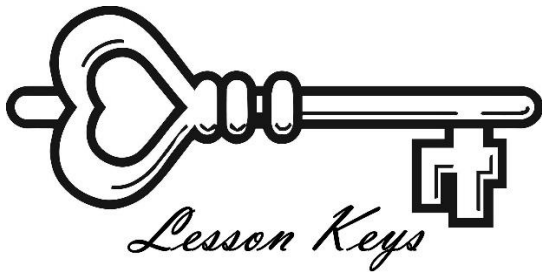
<sup>18</sup> “You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month Abib, for in the month Abib you came out from Egypt. <sup>19</sup> All that open the womb are mine, all your male<sup>[b]</sup> livestock, the firstborn of cow and sheep. <sup>20</sup> The firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem. And none shall appear before me empty-handed.

<sup>21</sup> “Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest. In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest. <sup>22</sup> You shall observe the Feast of Weeks, the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end. <sup>23</sup> Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the LORD God, the God of Israel. <sup>24</sup> For I will cast out nations before you and enlarge your borders; no one shall covet your land, when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year.

<sup>25</sup> “You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with anything leavened, or let the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover remain until the morning. <sup>26</sup> The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.”



<sup>27</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, “Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” <sup>28</sup> So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.



1. How quickly after saying, “all that the Lord has said we will do,” the Children of Israel turned to an idol.
2. The foolishness of idolatry (also see Isaiah 44)
3. God’s mercy and grace even in the face of Israel’s idolatry—our sin, including idolatry (cf. secret vs. open idolatry)
4. Moses’ role as mediator, a type of Christ (Deuteronomy 18:15, 1 Timothy 2:5)
5. God is a God of love and justice.