

E4. The Ten Commandments/The Golden Calf

Exodus 19:17-20:20; 24:12; 31:18 through Exodus 32; 34:1-4

Memory Verse

“Your word is like a lamp that shows me the way.” --Psalms 119:105 (NIRV)

Bible Lesson

Message:

God expects us to follow His commandments.

Moses was still leading the people in the desert. One day, Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God. They stood at the foot of the mountain. Smoke covered Mount Sinai, because the Lord came down on it in fire. The smoke rose up from it like smoke from a furnace. The whole mountain trembled and shook. The sound of the trumpet got louder and louder. Then Moses spoke. And the voice of God answered him.

The Lord came down to the top of Mount Sinai. He told Moses to come to the top of the mountain. So Moses went up. The Lord told Moses to be sure that none of the other people came up on the mountain, or something terrible would happen.

God Gives His People the Ten Commandments

God gave Moses the 10 Commandments to give to the people. God said,

1. I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other Gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.
3. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
4. Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.
5. You shall not murder.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.

Then the people heard the thunder and the trumpet. They saw the lightning on the mountain and smoke rising from the mountain. They shook with fear and stood far away from the mountain. Then they said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself. Then we will listen. But don’t let God speak to us, or we will die.”

Then Moses said to the people, “Don’t be afraid. God has come to test you. He wants you to respect Him so you will not sin.”

Exodus 24:12

Later, the Lord said to Moses, “Come up the mountain to me. Wait there, and I will give you two stone tablets. On these are the teachings and the commandments. I have written these to teach the people.”

So the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai. Then the Lord gave him the two stone tablets with the agreement written on them. The finger of God wrote the commands on the stones.

Israel Worships a Golden Calf

The people saw that Moses took a long time to come down from the mountain. He was gone for 40 days and 40 nights. So they gathered around Aaron. They said to him, "Moses led us out of Egypt. But we don't know what has happened to him. So make us a god that will lead us."

Aaron answered them, "Take the gold earrings off your wives, your sons and your daughters. Bring the earrings to me." So all of the people took off their earrings and they brought them to Aaron. He took what they gave him and made it into a metal statue of a calf. Then the people said, "Israel, here is your god who brought you up out of Egypt."

When Aaron saw it, he built an altar in front of the calf. He said, "Tomorrow will be a feast day in the Lord's honor." So the next day the people got up early. They sacrificed burnt offerings and brought friendship offerings. They sat down to eat and drink. Then they got up to dance wildly in front of their god.

The Lord spoke to Moses. He said, "Go down. Your people you brought up out of Egypt have become very sinful. They have quickly turned away from what I commanded them. They have made themselves a statue of a god that looks like a calf and offered sacrifices to it. The people said, 'Israel, these are your gods who brought you out of Egypt.'" The Lord said to Moses: "I have seen those people. I know that they are very stubborn people. So now do not stop me. I am so angry with them that I am going to destroy them. Then I will make you and your descendants a great nation."

But Moses asked the Lord his God to show favor to the people. "Lord," he said, "don't let your anger destroy your people. You used your great power and mighty hand to bring them out of Egypt. Don't let your anger destroy your people. Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel. You made a promise. You took an oath in your name. You said, 'I will make your children after you as many as the stars in the sky. I will give them all of this land I promised them. It will belong to them forever.'"

Then the Lord took pity on his people and changed His mind. He didn't destroy them as He had said He would. Moses turned and went down the mountain. He had the two tablets of the covenant in his hands. Words were written on both sides of the tablets, front and back. The words had been written by God.

As Moses approached the camp, he saw the calf. He also saw the people dancing. Moses became very angry and he threw down the stone tablets that he was carrying. They broke into pieces at the foot of the mountain. He took the calf the people had made. He melted it in the fire. Then he ground the gold into powder and scattered it into the water. And he made the people of Israel drink the water.

He said to Aaron, "What did these people do to you? How did they make you lead them into such terrible sin?" Aaron told Moses the story of how they had created the Golden Calf.

The next day Moses went up to the mountain to pray for the people and to plead for the Israelites. The Lord caused terrible things to happen to the people because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.

Exodus 34:1-4

The Lord said to Moses, "Cut two more stone tablets like the first two. I will write the same words on them that were on the first two stones which you broke. Be ready tomorrow morning. Then come up on Mount Sinai. Stand before me there on the top of the mountain. No one may come with you. No one should even be seen any place on the mountain. Not even the sheep or cattle may eat grass near that mountain."

So Moses cut two stone tablets like the first ones. Then early the next morning he went up Mount Sinai. He did this just as the Lord had commanded him. Moses carried the two stone tablets with him.



Talk About It

Talk with your children about the Ten Commandments and help them to understand what they mean. Refer to the list below to help you put the commandments into “child-friendly” language. Help your child to understand that it is very important to do our best to follow all of God’s commandments each day. Remind your child that no one is perfect, and that we are so fortunate to be able to have our sins forgiven when we make a mistake and “break” one of God’s commandments. Talk about it.

“The Ten Commandments for Kids”

1. *Love God more than you love anything else. Don’t make anything in your life more important than God.*
2. *Always say God’s name with love and respect.*
3. *Honor the Lord by resting on Sunday.*
4. *Love and respect your mom and dad.*
5. *Never hurt anyone.*
6. *Always be faithful to your husband and wife.*
7. *Don’t take anything that isn’t yours.*
8. *Always tell the truth.*
9. *Be happy with what you have.*
10. *Don’t wish to have other people’s things.*