

Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2021 2:43 PM
Subject: Tuesday Nite's MOB Study on Exodus 32

"The LORD's lovingkindness indeed never ceases, for His compassions never fail! They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness! (Lamentations 3:22-23)

Last week, we saw that after the LORD had finished giving instructions to Moses, on the mountain, for building the tabernacle, and making garments for Aaron and his sons, and for consecrating them to serve as priests before Him, He announced that He had called Bezalel and Oholiab, and others (who remained unnamed), and filled them with His Spirit, and given them special skills, that they might be able to make all the things that He commanded--all in conformance with the "pattern" given to Moses on the mountain! With that, we saw the parallels between God's work of creation (in Genesis 1) and the work that was to be accomplished by the sons of Israel in building the tabernacle! Just as God did His work of creation by means of His "hovering" Spirit, so "Bezalel, Oholiab & Co" were to be equipped to accomplish their mission, by the "enabling" Spirit of God! But God was quick to remind all the people that, despite the heavy demands of the task before them, they were to take time to "observe the sabbaths of complete rest"!

Our lesson last week ended with the LORD, having completed His commands and instructions, giving Moses the two "stone tablets of testimony," imprinted with the ten commandments, written by the "finger of God." Meanwhile, things were not going so well down below! And that brings us to Exodus 32, and our lesson for Tuesday nite!

And here is how it begins! "Now when the people saw that Moses was delayed coming down from the mountain, they assembled around Aaron and said to him, 'Come, make us a god who will go before us!' And so, Aaron--apparently believing that Moses would not be returning and wanting to please the people--actually responded by making a "golden calf" for them to worship, using the gold from the earrings of the women, and then "building an altar...and offerings burnt offerings, and proclaiming a feast," with the people "sitting down to eat and drink and rising to play"! In effect, following the evil practices of pagan nations! (Tom Joyce, who led in our full group session, said that, in a way, he "hated this lesson," and we can all relate to that as it highlights the "fallenness" of us all!)

Exodus 32:7-10 records how the LORD responded! Noting to Moses "how quickly the people had turned aside from the way which He (the LORD) had commanded them"! And particularly how they could have "worshipped" the golden calf as the "god who brought them up from the land of Egypt"! His "anger burned" and He was ready to destroy them all!

Then Moses "entreated" the LORD! (Constable calls it a "model intercessory prayer"!)

Appealing to Him based on how He had "brought them out of the land of Egypt, with great power and a mighty hand" (all for nothing?!). And noting how His "glory and reputation" were at stake (what would the Egyptians say?) And, most importantly, citing His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (the "unconditional" promises and the Abrahamic covenant)!

"So, the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people"-- Verse 14 says! Wow! Did our sovereign, "immutable" God just change His mind? (James 1:17 speaks of our God as "the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"! Speaking of His character and eternal plan!)

The Hebrew word here for "changing His mind" is "nacham," which can also mean to "bring great sorrow," as in Genesis 6:6 where the Lord, when He "saw all the wickedness on the earth...was sorry that He had made man on the earth and was grieved in His heart"! And yet He did not change His eternal plan for redeeming man, whom He had created in His own image! Likewise, in Jonah 3:10, when God saw that the people of Nineveh "turned from their wicked way," He "relented concerning the calamity which He had declared that He would bring upon them"!

MacArthur notes that "a divine intention is not an unchangeable divine decree"! And that seems to be the case in our text in Exodus! Thank God for His grace and mercy! And that His "lovingkindness indeed never ceases," and that "His compassions never fail!" (which is our memory verse for this lesson!)

Well, back to our text! Moses' "anger" with the people seems similarly "justified" (as "righteous indignation"?), but "shattering the tablets at the foot of the mountain" (the tablets with writing by the "finger of God")? And "burning" the golden calf...and grinding it into powder...and scattering it on the surface of the water...and making the people drink it?" Wow!

And confronting Aaron (a literal "fallen brother")! Then hearing Aaron's excuses and the "blame game" (reminiscent of Adam's response to God after the "Fall" in the garden!) We are reminded of Jesse's sermon Sunday on the reality of sin in our own lives as believers and the need to deal with it by returning to the Word, and confessing our sins to God, and the role of prayer--and the importance of balance between reading the Word and praying!)

But Moses did not stop there! When he saw the people "out of control," Exodus 32:26 says, he "stood in the gate of the camp" and called for all the people who "were with the LORD" to "come to him" (but with only the "sons of Levi" apparently responding)!

Moses would remind the people again of their "great sin" and vow to "go back up to the LORD" to try to "make atonement" for them! And he would later plead with the LORD to "forgive the people's sin" or, if not, to "blot him out of the book"! Wow! (We're reminded of the apostle Paul making a similar appeal to God, "wishing himself to be accursed...for the sake of his kinsmen"!)

Well, our lesson ends with a reminder from God that "the wages of sin is death"! And yet, He instructed Moses to "go back and lead the people where I told you"! But now, with "an angel" (and not Him????) leading them! (And He would judge the people for their sin! But thank God, His eternal plan for Israel--and for the "redemption" of sinful mankind--did not, and has not, changed!)

The verse cited by Pastor Alex in his benedictory closing Sunday seems an appropriate closing here: "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear (reverence) Him!" (Psalm 103:11)

And our MOBster brother, Luckson, offered another fitting closing: "Now return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil!" (Joel 2:13-14)

"Bless the LORD, O my soul!"

Lowell