

"Exploring the Golden Calves of the Heart"

Exodus 32:1-6

August 27, 2017

Exodus 32:1-6 ...

a "Split Scene Moment"

Ex 24:12, 15-18

The Time Frame - From the Passover in Goshen to the Giving of the Law (Ex 20) = ~50 Days + ~40 Days

Ex 20:22-23 And the Lord said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the people of Israel: 'You have seen for yourselves that I have talked with you from heaven.
²³ You shall not make gods of silver to be with me, nor shall you make for yourselves gods of gold.'

Exploring the Opportunity for Idolatry

v. 1 ... *"When the people saw that Moses delayed"*

- What type of circumstances created their "urgency to look to an idol"?
 - **DELAY!!**
 - **UNCERTAINTY**

NOTE: *Idolatry gets revealed under particular circumstances!*

v. 1 ... *"make us gods that will go before us"*

- What do they seek to remedy this uncomfortable uncertainty?
... **They seek a 'god'** ...something bigger than themselves that can provide what they believe they need!

Exploring the Human Propensity to Idolatry

- **MAN'S 'LOOKING TO SOMETHING/SOMEONE' IS A CREATURELY INSTINCT**

...*What is an "IDOL"?* ...Something or someone that we "LOOK TO" to play the role God is supposed to be playing to us

"...anything you seek to give you what only God can give." Tim Keller, "Counterfeit Gods", p. xviii

- **EDEN** ...Man is a creature in a Big World! ...He is not designed for self-sufficiency, he is designed to feel incomplete, in need, lacking ...he is wired to "seek out completion, satisfaction, wholeness/wellness, provision, etc."
- **Mt. Sinai (Ex 20) - Command #1** - "I am YAHWEH, you shall have NO OTHER gods before/besides Me"
 - God's first order of business is to address the known inner reality and condition of man ...**that man is 'wired to look to something' that will fulfill him, that will protect him, that will provide for him, that will give him pleasure & purpose!**
 - This first order of business is what establishes ALL THE OTHER COMMANDS! ...If you get #1 Wrong, you will move in and out of getting all the others Wrong!

"The central plot device of 'The Lord of the Rings' is the Dark Lord Sauron's Ring of Power, which corrupts anyone who tries to use it, however good his or her intentions. The Ring is what Professor Tom Shippey calls 'a psychic amplifier', which takes the heart's fondest desires and magnifies them to idolatrous proportions. Some good characters in the book want to liberate slaves, or preserve their people's land, or visit wrongdoers with punishment. These are all good objectives. But the Ring makes them willing to do anything to achieve them, anything at all. It turns the good thing into an absolute that overturns every other allegiance or value. The wearer of the Ring becomes increasingly enslaved and addicted to it, for an idol is something we cannot live without. We must have it, and therefore it drives us to break rules we once honored, to harm others and even ourselves in order to get it. Idols are spiritual addictions that lead to terrible evil, in Tolkien's novel and real life." Tim Keller, "Counterfeit Gods", p. xiv

- **MAN LEARNS FROM OTHERS WHAT TO 'LOOK TO'**

- **v. 2-4** ...Aaron built what they had been taught to look to by the Egyptians!

"We should remember that just a few months prior to this incident, the Israelites and the other ethnic groups among them were still living in Egypt, deeply influenced by its pagan culture, just as they had been for hundreds of years. They had all grown up in a society devoted to the religious system and way of life known as idolatry, and they were understandably, though by no means excusably, not yet used to the rigorous anti-idolatry demands of Yahweh's covenant with them. Because the attractions of idolatry for them were so strong and their recent stance against it so derivative and new, they were, in fact, not at all genuinely committed to its eradication in their beliefs and practices, as the present passage demonstrates all too clearly." Douglas Stuart, "Exodus", NAC,

"You can take the people out of Egypt easier & faster than you can take Egypt out of the people!"

"We think that idols are bad things, but that is almost never the case. The greater the good, the more likely we are to expect that it can satisfy our deepest needs and hopes. Anything can serve as a counterfeit god, especially the very best things in life. ...It can be family and children, or career and making money, or achievement and critical acclaim, or saving 'face' and social standing. It can be a romantic relationship, peer approval, competence and skill, secure and comfortable circumstances, your beauty or your brains, a greater political or social cause, your morality and virtue, or even success in the Christian ministry." Tim Keller, "Counterfeit Gods", p. xvii

? - When the circumstances of life are RIPE (Delay + Uncertainty or Vulnerability or a Void) ...Which 'Learned Golden Calf' emerges in your own heart?

- **Something is 'Idolatrous' When We Establish or Set it up in our lives and we Intentionally Look to It ...v. 4-6, 8**

The Sobering Reality of 'Managing Our Own Idolatry'

...From Sinai to Solomon to the N.T. Christian ...the battle with idols continues until the New Heavens and New Earth

Josh 24:14-15, 23... Judg 2:11-12 ...Approx. 1350BC

Rachel (Jacob's wife) had "household Idols" that she took with her from her father's home (Gen 31) ...**Michal (David's wife) had a household idol** in 1Sam 19 [1000BC]

1Kings 11:4 For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

1Jn 5:21 ... "Little children, keep yourselves from idols"

*"As we study Exodus, we see how the story of Israel's salvation gets retraced in the geography of our own souls. Like the Israelites, we are living in the wilderness between baptism (remember the Red Sea!) and the Promised Land. When things get difficult, we often try to return to the Egypt of our sin. So the story of the golden calf tells us more than what happened; it tells us what happens. It exposes the anatomy of our own idolatry."
Phillip Ryken, "Exodus", p. 972*

1Cor 10:1-14 ...This is how Paul used the Lesson of Ex. 32 in the lives of N.T. Christians

v. 11-14 ...How are we to benefit from Ex 32?

- Observe and learn from their experience ...become self-educated and self-aware
- There is Great Hope—God is faithful in the midst of your temptation ...You Don't Have to Fail!