

Quarter Three: Exodus: Journey to the Promised Land

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Lesson 11—Apostasy & Intercession

Tuesday: Corrupting Themselves

September 9, 2025

- **Last Week:** “The Covenant & the Blueprint”
 - Exodus 24 – 31
 - Relationship with God: ratification of the covenant
 - The sanctuary & Sabbath & giving of the law to Moses
- **This Week:** “Apostasy & Intercession”
 - Exodus 32
 - Sin at the golden calf & intercession
 - The apostasy of the people, so soon after the covenant
 - Lessons of that apostasy & God’s love for sinners

Memory Text: “Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, ‘Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written’” (Ex 32:31, 32, NKJV).

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** Failed Leadership (John D)
 - Ex 32:1 – 6 – the people’s plea for a visible god; Aaron’s lack of courage & conviction led to great apostasy
- 2. **Monday:** Idolatry & Evil (James)
 - Ex 32:6 – the danger of idolatry & immorality – replacing the Creator with the created
- 3. **Tuesday:** Corrupting Themselves (Jill)
 - Ex 32:7, 8 – sin of the people; the danger of the idols we hold today in place of God
- 4. **Wednesday:** God’s Righteous Wrath (John L)
 - Ex 32:9 – 29 – God’s anger with the disobedience; Moses’ intercession & then Moses’ anger at the people; the consequences for their sin
- 5. **Thursday:** Intercession (SQ)
 - Ex 32:30 – 32 – Moses’ intercession for the people (Moses as a type of Christ); substitutionary atonement

Tuesday: Corrupting Themselves

Exodus 32:7, 8; Ex 20:2; Eze 8:1 – 18; Eze 20:1 – 44; Eze 22:1 – 12

- **Corrupting Themselves:**
 - 2 verses – from God to Moses
 - Lessons for leaders – and all

5 Lessons for Leaders

- Ex 32:7a – “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Go, get down! ...’”
 - **Takeaway #1: God gives instructions to leadership: be ready to listen & obey**
 - Very specific & emphatic: “Go, get down”
 - All leaders in some capacity
 - Mother in home
 - Church
 - Work
 - Community / with neighbors or family
 - Isa 30:21 – “Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk into it,’ whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.”
 - Do we want to follow?
 - Too busy
 - Too self-important (I know better than God)
 - Too self-absorbed
 - Too afraid
- Ex 32:7b – “...For **your people** whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have **corrupted themselves.**”
 - **Takeaway #2: God holds leaders accountable for the people under them: lead responsibly**
 - Usually focus on God’s switch from “My people” to “your people”
 - Ex 3:10 – “Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring **My people**, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”
 - God to Moses, at burning bush
 - **Focus on leadership:** what are leaders accountable for?
 - Heb 13:17 – “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account.”
 - Their **humility**
 - Jesus
 - Mark 10:44, 45 – “And whoever of you desires to be first, shall be the slave of all. (45) For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”
 - Their **calling**
 - Paul
 - Eph 4:1 – “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.”
 - The **way they treat others**
 - Paul / Jesus
 - Eph 4:2 – “with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.”
 - Eph 4:15 – “speaking the truth in love”

- **Direction / guidance** provided to those they lead
 - Solomon
 - James 1:5 – “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all men liberally...”
- Their **courage**
 - David with Goliath / Moses with Israelites
 - Ex 5:1 – “Let My people go!”
- #2: God holds leaders accountable for the people under them
- **Takeaway #3: Yet, people under leaders have freedom of choice: choose wisely**
 - People “corrupted themselves”
 - Did Moses cause that corruption?
 - Balance between #2 & #3
 - Leaders are responsible – yet, people still have freedom of choice
 - Jesus had 12 disciples
 - One was a traitor
 - Jesus taught perfectly
 - Some still walked away – John 6:66 – “From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.”
 - Jesus was the Messiah
 - Some still rejected Him & almost all forsook Him at the cross
- Ex 32:8a – ““They have turned **aside quickly** out of the way which I commanded them....”
 - **Takeaway #4: Sin enters quickly and insidiously: don’t forget God**
 - They were God’s people – didn’t recognize their step into sin
 - 40 days after the giving & ratification of the covenant
 - God had rescued them from Egypt
 - Delivered them at the Red Sea
 - Given them food to eat & water to drink
 - Brought them into covenant relationship with Himself
 - Deut 8:2 – “And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. (3) So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know...that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. ...(11) Beware... (12) lest – when you have eaten and are full & have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; ... (14) when your heart is lifted up, and you forget that LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; (15) who led you through that great and terrible wilderness ... (16) who fed you in the wilderness with manna... (18) And you shall remember the Lord your God...”

- Ex 32:8b – “...They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it, and sacrificed to it, and said, “This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!””
 - **Takeaway #5: Idol worship can happen to anyone: be on guard**
 - Aaron was swept away, and he was a leader
 - People swept away, too
 - Warned against idol worship
 - Ex 20:2, 3 – “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. (3) You shall have no other gods before Me.”
 - God was their Savior, their Provider, their Protector, their Deliverer
 - But, they trusted, instead, in idols
 - Eze 8
 - Years later, just before Babylonian captivity
 - Idol worship is rampant in God’s temple in Jerusalem
 - Parallel to end-times – false worship, climaxing with the counterfeit worship paralleling the worship of the sun & identified as the mark of the beast
 - Eze 20
 - History of Israel’s rebellion & idol worship
 - God brought them out of Egypt & called to them to worship Him alone
 - Eze 20:8 – “But they rebelled against Me and would not obey Me. They did not all cast away the abominations which were before their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt...”
 - God was merciful to them, for His name’s sake & brought them into the wilderness
 - Eze 20:13 – “Yet the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes; they despised My judgments...”
 - God was merciful to them, for His name’s sake, & He called to their children to follow Him
 - Eze 20:21 – “Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My statutes...”
 - God was merciful to them, for His name’s sake, & brought them into the land He had promised
 - Eze 20:28 – “When I brought them into the land concerning which I had raised My hand in an oath to give them,, and they saw all the high hills and all the thick trees, there they offered their sacrifices and provoked Me with their offerings... (31) For when you offer your gifts and make your sons pass through the fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols, even to this day....(32) What you have in your mind shall never be, when you say, ‘We will be like the Gentiles, like the families in other countries, serving wood and stone.’”

- Idol = anything in the place of God
 - An idol captures our mind, attention, affection, & time – more than God
 - Can be negative things; could even be good & beautiful things
 - Video games / movies / sports
 - Music / books
 - Money / power
 - Pornography / impure thoughts
 - Shopping / work / ministry / family
 - Drugs / alcohol / sweets
 - School / politics
 - Pride / selfishness

Lessons for Leaders

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- #4: Sin enters quickly and insidiously: don't forget God
- #5: Idol worship can happen to anyone: be on guard