

Program: SS Panel 2025 3 Q

Quarterly title: Exodus

Quarterly author: Jiří Moskala

Lesson Title: #11 Apostasy and Intercession

For Lesson Dates: Date Here, 2025

Section title: Sunday - Failed Leadership

Record date: Wednesday July 22 , 2025

Note: This color and font = quarterly text

Note: This color and font = John Dinzey notes

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Question:

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READ

NIL: Not in Lesson

John Dinzey.2025.Q3.L11. Failed Leadership

Next week: Les #12 "Please, Show Me Your Glory"

Lesson 11

*September 6–12

Apostasy *and* Intercession

SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Exod. 32:1–6; Ps. 115:4–8; Isa. 44:9, 10; Rom. 1:22–27; Exod. 32:7–32; Isa. 53:4.*

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’” (*Exodus 32:31, 32, NKJV*).

Moses had been absent from the camp of Israel for only 40 days and what happened? God's people had turned away from Him and worshiped a human-made idol, the golden calf. After so many mighty signs, experiences, and miracles, how could they have done that?

There could be many answers, and perhaps some truth in them all. Did the people not understand who God really was? Or were their powerful experiences with Him overshadowed by their carnal and sinful desires? Did they not appreciate what God had done for them but, instead, took it all for granted? Was their understanding clouded, marred by their everyday preoccupations and old sinful thinking? Were they simply ungrateful for God's merciful actions on their behalf? Did they so quickly forget the mighty acts of God (*Ps. 106:13, 21–23*)? Or could it all be blamed on Aaron's failed leadership? “**The LORD was very angry with Aaron and would have destroyed him**” (*Deut. 9:20, NKJV*).

Whatever the reasons for this terrible apostasy, what lessons can we draw from it, not only about human sinfulness but about God's gracious love for humans, despite their sinfulness?

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, September 13.*

SUNDAY

September 7

Failed Leadership

God called Moses to spend time with Him. Forty days and forty nights might have been a short period for Moses, but it seemed long, too long, for the Israelites. Their visible leader was absent. They became disoriented, impatient, fearful, and insecure. They wanted to have a visible god who would lead them, the “gods” whom they had seen all their lives in idolatrous Egypt.

Read Exodus 32:1–6. How was it possible for Aaron’s leadership to fail so spectacularly?

Exodus 32:1–6 1 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, “Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for *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.”

Make us gods.

From:>> SDA BC Inasmuch as their sojourn in Egypt had accustomed the Hebrews to material forms of deity, it was difficult for them to trust in an invisible God. Though the for “gods” in Hebrew is ’Elohim, the plural form of the word, some Bible scholars affirm that “gods” here and in vs. 4, 8, and 31 should be translated “a god,” considering that the plural is used intensively to emphasize the fact that the golden calf was a false god in contrast to the Lord, the true God.

Go before us.

Weary of waiting so long at Sinai and eager to continue their journey to the Promised Land, the people demanded a visible god at their head to inspire them with confidence and courage (see 1 Sam. 4:3–8). How well it would have been had they used this period of waiting in meditation upon the law of God, and thus prepared their hearts to receive further revelations from Him. Had they done so they would have been able to resist this temptation. To a large extent the spirit of apostasy was generated by the “mixed multitude,” who had joined the Israelites to escape the plagues of Egypt. They were a constant hindrance and a snare to Israel (Ex. 12:38; Num. 11:4). They are to be compared to the “lewd fellows” of Acts 17:5.

Exo 17:3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore *is* this *that* thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

Exo 17:4 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.

Exo 17:5 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go.

Exo 17:6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Exodus 32::2 And Aaron said to them, “Break off the golden earrings which *are* in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me.”

3 So all the people broke off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* to Aaron.

4 And he received *the gold* from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf.

Then they said, “This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!”

Exodus 32:5 So when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow *is* a feast to the Lord.”

Lord: **H3068** (**Strong**) יְהוָה yĕhōvâh yeh-ho-vaw'

From **H1961**; (the) *self Existent* or eternal; *Jehovah*, Jewish national name of God: - Jehovah, the Lord. Compare **H3050**, **H3069**.

Exodus 32:6 Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

Aaron did not rise to the occasion. He failed to seize the moment and do what was right. Instead of trusting the Lord, he wilted before the majority. The people demanded the unthinkable: " 'Come, make us a god who will go before us' " (Exod. 32:1, NASB), and he consented.

People willingly gave gold to make the idol, and Aaron not only did not stop them, but in fact, he invited them to donate. He then participated in the molding of this false god. Afterward, the people declared: "This is your god, Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt" (Exod. 32:4, NASB). So sinful, wicked, and short-sighted. They had just fabricated this idol and then stated that it, the idol, had delivered them. Isn't it amazing how sinful desires can pervert our thinking and actions? People celebrate their own creations, and their humanity and morality become debased in the process.

Exo 4:27 And the LORD said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him.

Exo 6:13 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

>>> Aaron had seen God part the red sea, etc.

*****READ*****

"Such a crisis demanded a man of firmness, decision, and unflinching courage; one who held the honor of God above popular favor, personal safety, or life itself. But the present leader of Israel was not of this character. Aaron feebly remonstrated with the people, but his wavering and timidity at the critical

moment only rendered them the more determined. The tumult increased. A blind, unreasoning frenzy seemed to take possession of the multitude. There were some who remained true to their covenant with God, but the greater part of the people joined in the apostasy. **Aaron feared for his own safety; and instead of nobly standing up for the honor of God, he yielded to the demands of the multitude.**”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 316, 317.

How could Aaron, a leader, have been so weak? In what ways might Aaron have sought to justify in his own heart his terrible actions?

[illegible]

Additional Notes

Aaron's failure to be true to his trust brought the rebuke of God upon him. Had he been steadfast, God would have shielded him from harm. We have compliant Aarons in our day, those who hold positions of authority in the church and who coincide with an unconsecrated people and thus lead them to sin. They expose themselves and the people to the wrath of God. However much Aaron excused himself, God regarded him as the principal agent in this terrible transgression. Here is an example traced by the pen of inspiration, in the pages of sacred history, as a lesson to all ministers and those who are in responsible positions, that they should in no case imitate the example of unfaithful Aaron. We have in these last days, as much occasion to tremble with fear at the will of God, as the Israelites had when they stood at the foot of the mountain. ST May 20, 1880, par. 9

Aaron failing to stand up boldly for the right, his yielding to the strength of numbers, placed him with the majority. Aaron represents the cases of a large number composing our churches at the present day. They pass over sins existing in the church which grieve the spirit of God. They are lax where order and principle are involved, because it is not pleasant to reprove and correct wrongs. They are themselves carried along with the current, and become responsible for a fearful neglect of faithfulness. ST May 27, 1880, par. 4