

God's Glory in God's Word

Exodus Part 3: The Tabernacle, The Ark, and the Golden Calf

God promised Moses that not only would he rescue His people from the Egyptians, His people would plunder the Egyptians

And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians." (Exo 3:21-22)

As they were preparing to leave Egypt, God's people plundered the Egyptians

The Egyptians were urgent with the people to send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead." So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls being bound up in their cloaks on their shoulders. The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing. And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus, they plundered the Egyptians. (Exo 12:33-36)

After His people left Egypt, God instructed Moses to take a contribution of materials from the people for the building of His tabernacle (dwelling place). Many of the things he requested are the things plundered from the Egyptians.

And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, goats' hair, tanned rams' skins, goatskins, acacia wood, oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. (Exo 25:3-8)

God gave specific instruction as to how everything should be made:

Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it. (Exo 25:9)

Over 7 chapters, God gives specific instruction regarding the tabernacle, its furnishings, who would build it, and who would serve in it.

- The Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:10-22)
- Table for Bread (Exodus 25:23-30)
- The Golden Lampstand (Exodus 25:31-40)
- The Tabernacle (Exodus 26:1-37)
- The Bronze Altar (Exodus 27:1-8)
- The Court of the Tabernacle (Exodus 27:9-19)
- Oil for the Lamp (Exodus 27:20-21)
- The Priest's Garments (Exodus 28:1-43)
- The Consecration of the Priests (Exodus 29:1-46)
- The Altar of Incense (Exodus 30:1-10)
- The Census Tax (Exodus 30:11-16)
- The Bronze Basin (Exodus 30:17-21)
- The Anointing Oil and Incense (Exodus 30:22-38)
- Oholiab and Bezalel (Exodus 31:1-11)
- The Sabbath (Exodus 31:12-18)

And after growing tired of waiting 40 days (they lived in Egypt 430 years), the people took matters into their own hands.

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. 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." (Exo 32:1)

The plunder from the Egyptians intended for God's dwelling place with Israel instead became a false god to Israel

So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" (Exo 32:3-4)

They did not hide their sin from the Lord.

And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you." (Exo 32:7-10)

Yet, while they were worthy of death, God relented from His punishment.

But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, "O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.'" And the LORD relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people. (Exo 32:11-14)

But their actions were not without repercussions:

- Moses threw the tablets at the foot of the mountain and broke them – the tablets that “were the work of God” and whose writing was the “writing of God, engraved on the tablets”.
- Moses commanded the sons of Levi kill about three thousand men with the sword as an ordaining for the service of the Lord: “Today you have been ordained for the service of the LORD, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day.”
- The Lord sent a plague on the people.

Observations

- Our God is a God of order. He is specific in his plans, He is specific in how he desires to be worshipped.
- When the people chose to worship as they saw fit – worshipping a false god – the plagues to which they were formerly immune were visited on them.
- Our God is faithful to His promises. In spite of the people's sin, God kept a remnant.
- God's plan is always fulfilled – chapters 33-40 detail the implementation of the plans He had given to Moses – new tablets, a tabernacle, an ark, and the consecration of the priests.
- In times of uncertainty, suffering, or mourning, we must not abandon the promises of God. He will always keep his promises.

Next Week: Leviticus