TALKING POINTS

Exodus

Quarter 3, Lesson 11

"Apostasy and Intercession"

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MEMORY VERSE: "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

LESSON STUDY INTRO

This week's lesson examines the golden calf incident of Exodus 32.

1. Idolatry is deadly to the Christian life (Mon, Tue)

- "You shall have no other gods before Me" and "You shall not make for yourself a carved image" are the very first two commandments for a reason (Ex. 20:1-6).
    - "Idolatry denies the theological understanding that God is God and man is man… Whether it is blatant and open or something concealed in the heart, idolatry quickly ruptures our relationship with the Lord and leads in a downward moral spiral." Qtly, Mon, par 3
        - That's why there is a striking similarity between the golden calf incident of Exodus 32 and the condemnation of Gentile idolators in Romans 1:20-23.
- The results of idolatry are evident in behavior (Ex. 32:6; 17-19).
    - We become like what we worship. (Ps. 135:15-18; 2 Cor. 3:18)
        - "We become what we behold, and we will rise no higher than whatever 'god' we serve." Qtly, Tue, par 3
- Mental idols are just as dangerous as physical idols.
    - Pleasure, pride, and other such obsessions are often the golden calves we are tempted to worship.

> There are idols cherished in our families and in our churches today which have the same influence upon us as did the golden calf upon the Israelites. Will the people search themselves? Will the shepherds do their work as faithful sentinels of God? Will they see what idols they are cherishing? 13LtMs, Ms 52, 1898

2. God's cause needs leaders like Moses, not Aaron. (Sun)

- In a very real sense, the golden calf was a substitute for Moses (Ex. 32:1).

> Accustomed as they had been in Egypt to material representations of deity, it had been hard for them to trust in an invisible being, and they had come to rely upon Moses to sustain their faith… The people desired some image to represent God, and to go before them in the place of Moses." (PP 315)

- Though Aaron posed as a godly leader, he was merely a slave to the mob. (Ex. 32:2-6)
    - When confronted, Aaron blamed the people… and magic? the Lord? basically, anyone but himself! (Ex. 32:22-24).

> 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 feared for his own safety; and instead of nobly standing up for the honor of God, he yielded to the demands of the multitude." (PP 316, 317; Qtly, Sun, par 4)

- At a time when we need leaders like Moses, don't be an Aaron! (2 Tim. 3:1-5; 4:1-4).

> A religion that permits men, while observing the rites of worship, to devote themselves to selfish or sensual gratification, is as pleasing to the multitudes now as in the days of Israel. And there are still pliant Aarons, who, while holding positions of authority in the church, will yield to the desires of the unconsecrated, and thus encourage them in sin. PP 317

3. God's response to sin is both just and merciful. (Wed, Thu, Fri)

- Moses and the Lord (Ex. 32:7-14)
    - "Let me alone" was an invitation ("Come let us reason" Is 1:18)
        - Moses appeals to God's promise and reputation.
- Moses and the people (Ex. 32:15-30)
    - Moses is appalled at Aaron and the people.
    - The Levites execute decisive justice (see PP 325; Qtly Fri, par 2).
- Moses and the Lord again. (Ex. 32:31-34)
    - Moses typifies Christ in his offer to take their punishment.
    - Moses's offer was sincere but insufficient as no created being can take another's place. That is a work unique to Christ.

> The angels offered to become a sacrifice for man. But only He who created man had power to redeem him. EP 32

CONCLUSION

"Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" (1 Cor. 10:6, 7).