

NAVIGATING THE IN BETWEEN

The Golden Calf

Pastor Joel DeSelm

Historical Background

1. The place: It occurred at the foot of _____, believed to be in the Sinai Peninsula of modern-day Egypt.

Exodus 31:18

When the LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, He gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

2. The idol: Calf worship was common in ancient _____.

Exodus 32:1-4

1 When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered round Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him." 2 Aaron answered them, "Take off the gold ear-rings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me." 3 So all the people took off their ear-rings and brought them to Aaron. 4 He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt."

3. The donations: Gold jewelry had been received from the Egyptians, intended for furnishing the _____.

Exodus 12:35, 36

³⁵ The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. ³⁶ The LORD had made the Egyptians favorably disposed towards the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians.

(cf. Exodus 3:22; 11:2, 3; 25:2, 3)

Practical Lessons

When we read this account our first thought is this:

"How could this have happened?"

- Passover has provided deliverance from the angel of death.
- Protection from Egyptians by the crossing of the Red Sea.
- Presence of God through a cloud and pillar of fire.
- Provision of water, manna, and quail.
- Promises by the people to follow and obey God.

1. All of us are ever so close to returning to old _____ and operating in the habits of the flesh.

- The Israelites were followers – their tendency was idolatry
- Aaron was a pleaser – his tendency was compromise
- Moses was a man of conviction – his tendency was anger.

2. Old habits and tendencies will rise to the surface when we become impatient and refuse to wait on God's _____.

Exodus 32

21 He said to Aaron, "What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?" 22 "Do not be angry, my lord," Aaron answered. "You know how prone these people are to evil. 23 They said to me, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.' 24 So I told them, 'Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.' Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!"

3. We become particularly vulnerable to falling back into old patterns when we are distanced from God's Word and spiritual _____ in our lives. (Exodus 32:1)

4. _____ will attack us more fiercely when we make fresh determinations to serve the Lord.

