

Exodus Study and Discussion Questions

Lesson Six: Sinai: Rebellion and Tabernacle Completion – Exodus 32-40

Exodus 32:1-33:6

- 1) Read Exodus 32:1-6 carefully. Who did the Israelites think they were worshipping (as suggested by the text)? Aaron said, *“These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you out of Egypt”* (verse 4). It is unlikely that Aaron would credit anyone other than the Lord with bringing Israel out of Egypt. In verse 5, Aaron said, *“Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.”* From these statements, it seems that the idol was intended to represent the Lord. Some translations have the Israelites referring to the idol in the plural (*“Come, make us gods...”* [32:1] and *“these are your gods, Israel”* [32:4]). If these translations are correct, perhaps the plural reference was to the Lord *and* His image (the one they fashioned). There is no suggestion that Israel consciously rejected the Lord. Nevertheless, they broke the covenant regulation against fashioning any image (Exodus 20:4).
- 2) Read Exodus 32:9-10, 19-20, 25-29, 35 and 33:3, 5.
 - a) What were the consequences of Israel’s sin? The Lord and Moses were both angered by Israel’s sin (32:10, 19). According to 32:19-20, Moses broke the Lord’s tablets, then ground the golden idol to powder, added the powder to the Israelites’ water supply, and forced the Israelites to drink it. At the Lord’s command, the Levites killed 3,000 people who persisted in idolatry (32:28). Furthermore, the Lord struck Israel with a plague (32:35). Finally, according to 33:3 and 5, the Lord declared His unwillingness to continue with the Israelites in their journey.
 - b) Which tribe did God “set apart” from the rest of Israel and why? God set apart the tribe of Levi, because they showed their zeal for the Lord in their willingness to be the vehicle of Israel’s punishment (killing 3,000 of their presumably unrepentant, fellow Israelites).
- 3) In Exodus 32:26, Moses asked who was “for the Lord.” Are you? If so, how are you demonstrating zeal for Him? **Personal sharing**

Exodus 33:7-34:9

- 4) Read Exodus 33:12-17. Which verse indicates that God reversed His threat (Exodus 33:3)? Prior to Israel’s idolatry, God’s stated purpose for the Tabernacle was as a “house” where He would dwell among the Israelites. In 33:3, following Israel’s idolatry, the Lord said He would *not* go with the Israelites to Canaan (that is, His angel would go ahead of them [33:2], but He would not personally dwell among the Israelites). However, as a result of Moses’ intercession, God reversed that threat. First, He assured Moses He would be with him personally: *“My Presence will go with you”* (“you” is singular). But Moses asked for more: he asked for God’s presence in Israel’s camp (33:15-16). In 33:17, God reversed His threat and assured Moses, *“I will do the very thing you have asked...”*
- 5) How might you explain the seeming contradiction between Exodus 33:11 and 33:20? 33:11 uses the expression “face to face” figuratively to indicate the very personal relationship Moses had with God. Verse 20 states that no one can see God and live. Moses was *not* allowed to actually see God’s face. Indeed, God is Spirit and, therefore, *has no* physical “face”.
- 6) Read Exodus 33:18-34:7. Moses wanted a sign to confirm that the Lord would, indeed, go with them.
 - a) How did God’s proclamation of His “name” (in 34:6-7) confirm His intentions for Moses? Moses wanted confirmation that the Lord would go with Israel. The Lord’s name portrayed His graciousness, His slowness to anger, His abundant love and faithfulness, His steadfast love to thousands, and His forgiveness of wickedness, rebellion and sin (even though He does punish the guilty). The Lord’s name is His character. By telling Moses about His character, He was assuring Moses that, although He would punish the guilty, He would never forsake His people completely.

b) What confirmation does the name of the Lord, as proclaimed in these verses, give *you* as you face your present challenges? **Personal sharing**

Exodus 34:10-35

- 7) According to Exodus 34:10-28, the Lord reconfirmed His covenant. Using what you have learned about covenants in previous lessons, give a simple definition. **A covenant is a binding contract between two parties.**
- 8) Did the Mosaic covenant have conditions? If so, what were they? **Yes. From 34:11, the Mosaic covenant was conditional upon the people's obedience to God. Specifically, they were not to make treaties with the peoples in the land where they were going or to worship their gods. They were to keep the celebrations the Lord ordained, redeem their firstborns, keep the Sabbath and Passover requirements, tithe to the Lord, and not cook a young goat in its mother's milk (a heathen practice).**
- 9) Read Exodus 34:29-35. The preceding verse (28) reminds us that, leading up to this time, Moses spent 40 days and nights alone with God. What extra step will you take this week to bask in God's presence and in the knowledge of His Word, believing that a genuine, visible transformation in you will take place? **Personal sharing**

Exodus 35-40:33: These chapters tell how Israel constructed the Tabernacle, in accordance with the instructions Moses received in Exodus 25-31.

- 10) How might the repetitions in Exodus 38:22; 39:1, 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31, 32, 42, 43; and 40:16, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32 explain the writer's purpose in giving each detail of the Tabernacle's construction? **Throughout these chapters, the repeated phrase "just as the Lord commanded" reminds the reader that the details of the Tabernacle's construction had already been given to Moses (chapters 25-31) and that Israel faithfully obeyed the Lord in all of them.**
- 11) According to Exodus 25:2, 35:21, 29, specifically who was asked to donate the items used to build the Tabernacle? According to Exodus 36:4-7, was the giving adequate? **The people who were willing, whose hearts prompted them, were the ones asked to contribute. Exodus 36:6 says the people's generosity had to be restrained because they had given so abundantly.**
- 12) What is your motivation for giving gifts of time, money, goods or service to the Lord? **Personal sharing**

Exodus 1-40

- 13) What do you recall from your study of the book of Exodus (in this and previous lessons) that would support the idea that Exodus 40:34-35 describes a fitting climax? **According to Exodus 19:6 and 29:46, God brought Israel out of Egypt to be a kingdom of priests for Him and so that He might dwell among them. Chapter 40 tells of the Lord filling the Tabernacle with His presence (glory), just as He had promised. It was the final step in equipping His people for priesthood. The Israelites were equipped to represent God by the covenant commands He had given them, by what they learned about Him from the Tabernacle and its sacrifices, and ultimately, by His presence among them.**
- 14) Read Hebrews 9 and explain as simply as you can why Christians today do not have a Tabernacle (or Temple). **Hebrews 9 points out that Christ is the fulfillment of all the Tabernacle/Temple's symbolism.**
- 15) According to Exodus 40:36-38, the cloud that filled the Tabernacle (a physical manifestation of God's presence) lifted and guided the Israelites in their travels. What do you know from the Scriptures about how the Lord guides His people today? If possible, give an example of how you have personally experienced the "moving of the cloud" (the Lord's indication that you should make some kind of change or move). **The Lord guides people today through prayer, His word, the wisdom of other godly counselors, circumstances, and peace of heart. Personal sharing**