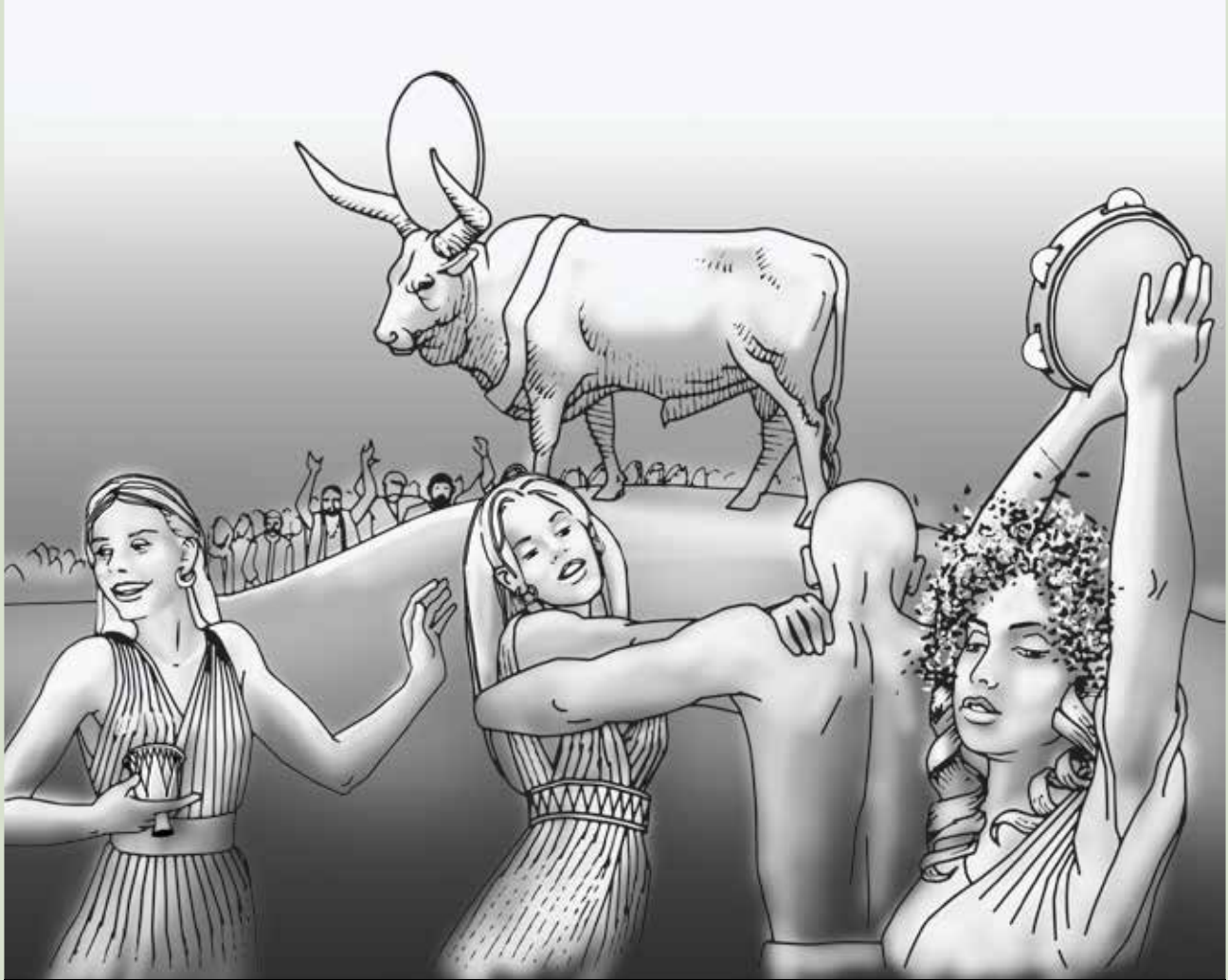


THE RESTORED CHURCH OF GOD®

CHILDREN'S BIBLE LESSONS



Israel and the Golden Calf



LEVEL 3
LESSON 6

Israel and the Golden Calf

In the previous lesson, we learned all about Israel's journey from Egypt. We saw that Israel was protected from the final plague because they observed the first Passover. God then led the Israelites out of Egypt through a miraculous event—the parting of the Red Sea. Once out of Egypt, Israel began to complain against God and Moses in the wilderness. Finally, God gave Israel the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai.

Many people believe that, with the death of Jesus Christ, the Ten Commandments are no longer in effect for mankind. Others believe that only some of the Commandments are still valid. It is important to understand that both of these views are wrong.

The Ten Commandments are God's spiritual laws that bring great joy to those who obey them. They are also the foundation upon which the rest of

God's laws are based. When they are broken, pain and misery result. If everyone lived their lives obeying all of God's laws, the world would be vastly different.

In a future lesson, we will see that the coming Kingdom of God will bring about this different world. This will be a world in which everyone will strive to obey God's laws, including the Ten Commandments.

“Signing” the Covenant

After God thundered the Ten Commandments, He then gave Israel many statutes and judgments through Moses, who wrote them all down. Everyone said, “We will surely obey the commands that the Eternal has said!”

The next morning, Moses constructed an altar at the bottom of the mountain. He also built twelve pillars,



which symbolized the twelve tribes of Israel. The people provided offerings to be sacrificed to God. Moses took half of the blood from the sacrifices and sprinkled it on the basins and the altar.

Then Moses read the Book of the Covenant to all the people. Once again, they said, “We will be obedient to all of God’s commands!” The other half of the blood from the sacrifices was sprinkled on the people,

with Moses saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God has made with you.”

Once Israel performed this act, there was no turning back. They agreed to obey God and reap numerous blessings in return. But they understood that if they disobeyed God, they would reap much misery. This act is similar to a person signing a contract—once it is signed, the person must do all that it says.

Israel Builds an Idol

When the ceremony was finished, God called to Moses and said, “Come join Me atop this mountain. I will give you tablets of stone upon which My commandments are written. Once you have received them, take them down to the people and teach them My ways.” Moses told the elders to wait at the bottom of the mountain to attend to various issues that the people may have while he and his assistant Joshua would be away.

As Moses started walking toward the top of the mountain, the glory of God rested on Mount Sinai like a consuming fire. All of Israel was amazed at this sight! God called to Moses from the midst of a cloud. Moses went into it and was there 40 days and 40 nights.

God gave Moses highly detailed instructions for the construction of the Tabernacle of Meeting. It needed to be built exactly as God had said. God is a holy and precise Being.

He also instructed Moses to collect an offering from all the people. God said, “From everyone who is willing to give, collect from them: gold, silver and bronze; blue, purple and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goats’ hair; ram skins dyed red, badger skins and acacia wood; oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for

the sweet incense; onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. This material is going to be used in the building of a sanctuary for Me, so that I may dwell among Israel.”

Meanwhile, at the base of the mountain, the people of Israel became impatient with Moses because he was away for so long. They gathered in front of his brother Aaron, and said, “Make some gods for us to worship. Moses is not going to return to us. We need some gods to guide us.”

Aaron told the people to gather earrings and bring them to him. He molded all the gold into a calf for the people to worship. They said, “Here is the god who brought us out of the land of Egypt.” Aaron built an altar for the calf, yet used it to proclaim a feast to the true God! The next day, the people offered sacrifices to the calf.

“Go, get down from here quickly! Your people have corrupted themselves,” said God. Write down what God said next in Exodus 32:8. _____



“Indeed, Israel is comprised of stiff-necked people! Therefore let Me alone Moses, as I am exceedingly furious with them. I am going to destroy them and make a great nation of you,” said God.

Moses pleaded with God not to destroy Israel. He said, “Why does Your wrath burn against Your people, those whom You delivered with mighty miracles from the bondage of Egypt? The Egyptians will hear of this and say that You brought Israel into the wilder-

ness only to destroy them. They will profane Your name because of it. Remember the oath that You swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” So God decided not to destroy Israel.

Israel had become corrupt in only 40 days! They completely forgot the covenant with God, which they had just agreed to keep.

One of the lessons for us today is that God forbids us from worshipping idols. The First Commandment is that people are to have no other gods before

Him. The Second Commandment is that people must not worship idols. The true God is to be most important in our lives.

God is a Spirit and commands true Christians to worship Him in Spirit. Most people today think they are worshipping God but are not. For example, they worship crosses and physical images of Jesus. No matter what people may say, such things are idols. They are to be avoided.

Test Your Memory:

1) Are *all* Ten Commandments still in effect today? _____

2) What would happen if everyone obeyed all of God's laws? _____

3) When Moses sprinkled blood on the people, what did he say? _____

4) How long was Moses atop Mount Sinai? _____

5) What did Aaron use to make the golden calf? _____

Moses Confronts the People

Moses decided to go to the bottom of the mountain. He carried two tablets of stone on which God had written His Law.

Joshua was with Moses and said to him, "There is a noise of war in the camp."

"It is not the sound of victory or defeat," said Moses. "I hear the sound of singing!"

As Moses approached the camp, he observed the Israelites singing and dancing around the golden calf. His anger was so great that he broke the stone tablets! He threw the calf into a fire and scattered its powder on the water. He then forced all of Israel to drink the water.

"Aaron, what did these people do to you that you have brought this terrible sin upon them?" Moses said.

"You know that these people are set on doing evil," Aaron answered. "They asked that I make a god for them, so I took all of their gold and threw it into the fire. And out came a golden calf!" Aaron did not tell the whole truth.

Moses commanded that all who were on God's side gather in front of him. All the Levites did so and received orders to kill 3,000 men for committing such a sin. It was a sad day in the land. The next day, Moses talked to God and asked Him to forgive Israel.



The Tabernacle of Meeting

If you recall, Moses broke the two tablets of stone upon which God's Law was written. So God said to Moses, "Cut two more tablets of stone. And I will write My Law upon them once again. Come up to Mount Sinai first thing in the morning and present yourself to Me. Make sure that no man or animal is with you."

Moses returned to the top of Mount Sinai. He was there 40 days and 40 nights once again, and he did not eat or drink anything. God told Moses that He would do great and marvelous things for Israel. He said that He would drive out all of Israel's enemies. But God also said that the people must beware and not serve their enemies' false gods. Write down what else God said in Exodus 34:13-14, 17. _____

After Moses descended from the mountain, he gathered all the people together. He asked them to bring to him all the materials needed to construct the Tabernacle of Meeting. The people were so excited that they provided more materials than were needed!

Like ancient Israel, God's people today should be filled with joy when giving offerings to God. It is a way of showing how much one appreciates all that God has done for him. It should not be viewed as a burden, for God loves a cheerful giver (II Corinthians 9:7)!

The Tabernacle of Meeting was made up of the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies is the place where God would appear and speak to Moses. It was surrounded by an outer court, which had a fence-like structure 150 feet long and 75 feet wide. The entrance faced the east and was 30 feet long.

Inside the outer court structure, there was an altar and a laver (or basin). The altar was used for sacrifices. It was made of acacia wood, overlaid with bronze. The laver was

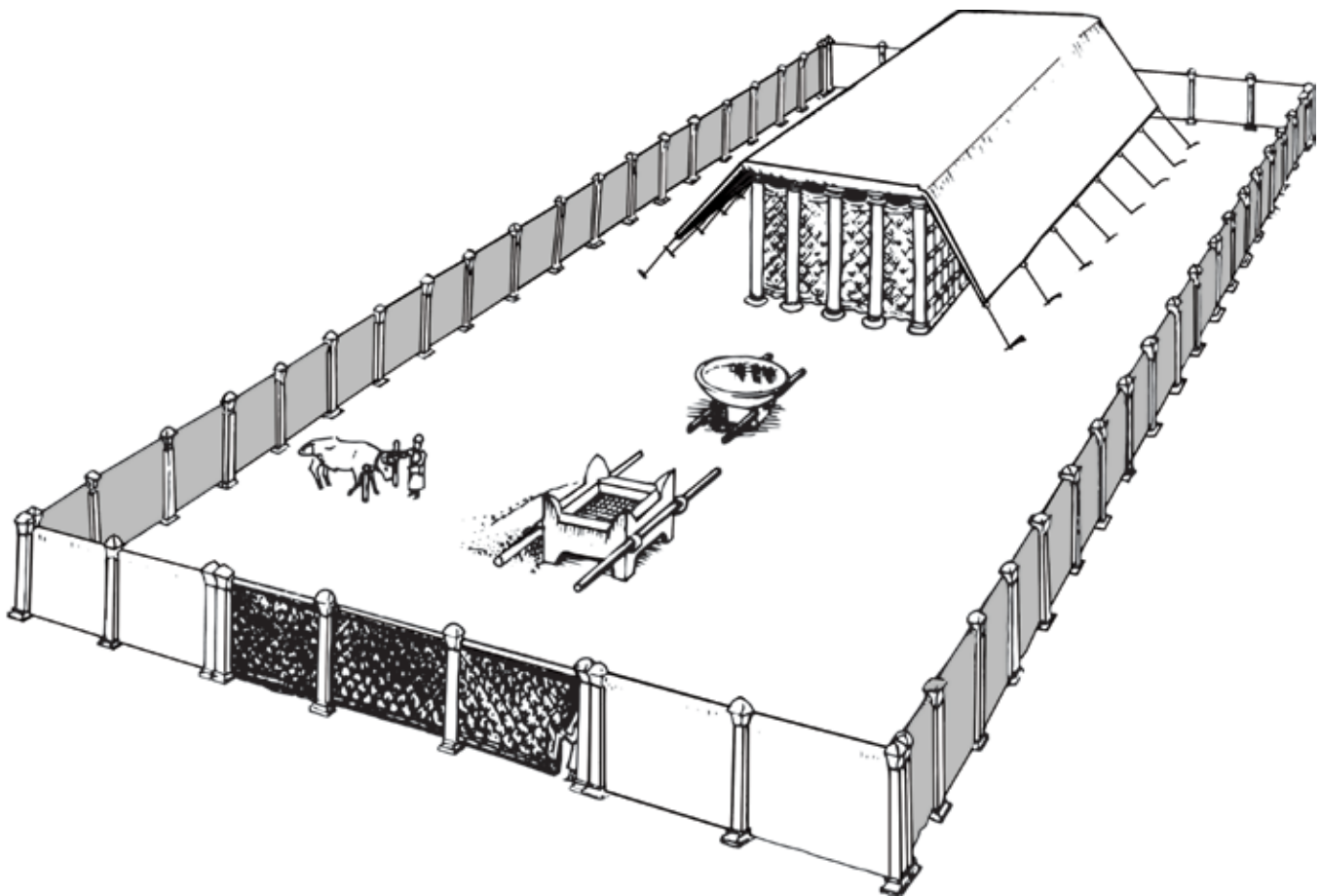


full of water and was used by the priests to wash themselves. It was made of polished brass. These were both out in the open.

The Holy Place was an enclosed structure 30 feet long and 15 feet wide. It contained the Candlestick, the Golden Altar and the Table of Showbread. The Candlestick was made of pure gold; it symbolized the seven Church eras (Revelation 1:20). The Golden Altar was made of pure gold and was used for burning incense. This symbolized prayers of the saints (Revelation 8:3-4).

The Table of Showbread was made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold. It contained gold plates, dishes, pitchers, bowls and unleavened bread. The priests were the only people allowed to eat the bread.

Next to the Holy Place was the Holy of Holies. The room was 15 feet long and 15 feet wide. A veil separated this part of the tabernacle from the Holy Place. The Ark of the Covenant was located here. It was made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold. Inside the ark were the stone tablets. (Aaron's



rod and a jar of manna that never spoiled were added later.) On top of the ark were two cherubim covering the mercy seat. This symbolized God's throne in heaven.

Test Your Memory:

1) On what was God's Law written? _____

2) What did Moses do with the golden calf? _____

3) What did God tell Moses that the people of Israel must beware of? _____

4) What items were inside the Holy Place? _____

5) What items were inside the Ark of the Covenant? _____

The Clean and the Unclean

After some time had passed, Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu, who served in special positions as priests over the people, committed a grave sin. They each took their fire pan, put fire on it,

and laid incense upon it. And they offered "strange fire" to God that He did not command them. So God consumed them with fire. Moses said to Aaron, "This is what God meant when He said, 'I must be regarded as holy.'"

Then God spoke to Aaron, "Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink when you go into the Tabernacle of Meeting. You will die if you do. This is a law that must be kept, so that you may distinguish between the holy and unholy, the clean and unclean."

An important lesson can be learned from this account: God must be worshipped properly. For example, one cannot observe pagan holidays, such as Christmas and Easter, and think that it is acceptable to God. Instead, God commands that His people observe the annual Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Firstfruits (Pentecost), the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day.

Many are not aware that God declares certain animals unclean. This means that they are unsuitable for humans to eat. In Leviticus chapter 11, God names the animals that are to be avoided. Some examples are: camels, rabbits, pigs, fish that do not have both fins and scales (such as catfish), eagles, vultures, owls, flying insects that creep on four legs, mice and lizards.



Many people break this command every day by eating pork chops, ham and bacon. These foods come from pigs. It is for our benefit that we avoid eating them. Numerous diseases and ill effects can be traced to eating pig products.

Test Your Memory:

1) What sin did Nadab and Abihu commit? _____

2) Is it acceptable to observe Christmas and Easter? _____

3) What can be traced to the eating of pig products? _____

BIBLE MEMORY: Leviticus 11:44-47

EVENT SCRAMBLE

The events of this activity are scrambled below.
Put them in order by placing the correct number on the left.

- ☐ Nadab and Abihu commit a grave sin.
- ☐ Moses breaks the two tablets.
- ☐ Israel offers sacrifices to the golden calf.
- ☐ Israel provides materials for the construction of the Tabernacle of Meeting.
- ☐ The glory of God rested on Mount Sinai like a consuming fire.
- ☐ Moses hears the sound of singing.
- ☐ Moses sprinkles blood on the people.
- ☐ Moses constructs an altar at the base of Mount Sinai.
- ☐ 3,000 Israelites are killed.
- ☐ God calls Israel a “stiff-necked people.”