

# The Golden Calf

By Matthew Day

**Exodus 19:5-6 KJV** Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: **6** And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

This scripture from last week's Torah portion shows the original intention for the priesthood. All of Israel were supposed to be priests. But we know from other passages that not all of Israel became priests. Only the Levites did. What happened?

Exodus chapter 32 tells the well-known story of the golden calf. While Moses was on the mountain, Israel turned to idolatry. Most of Israel had already rejected the commandments given to them less than a few months earlier.

**Exodus 32:5 KJV** And when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, "Tomorrow *is* a feast to the LORD."

LORD here is used in place of YHVH, the most holy name of God. It is only used of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jews today out of reverence will not speak this name, because it is so holy. Here Aaron said "Tomorrow is to be a feast for YHVH," as he built an altar for an idol, and the next day:

**Exodus 32:6 CJB** Early the next morning they got up and offered burnt offerings and presented peace offerings. Afterwards, the people sat down to eat and drink; then they got up to indulge in revelry.

Yeshua said something that I think fits this incident very well.

**Matthew 15:7-8 WEB** You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, **8** 'These people draw near to me with their mouth, And honor me with their lips; But their heart is far from me.

They said they were having a feast to God, but they worshiped an idol. Go back to verse 3.

**Matthew 15:3 WEB** He answered them, "Why do you also disobey the commandment of God because of your tradition?"

The Israelites spent four hundred and thirty years in Egypt. They probably absorbed a lot of Egyptian tradition. The golden calf probably came from Egyptian culture. They did what tradition told them instead of what God told them. And they did it thinking that

they were serving God.

**2 Kings 17:32-33 KJV** So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. **33** They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.

**2 Kings 17:34 KJV** Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel;

**2 Kings 17:41 KJV** So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

This is a pattern that keeps on repeating itself. People think they are serving the LORD while they follow their own way. It happened with the golden calf. It happened during the exile. It happened when Yeshua walked the earth. It happened during the dark ages when people were discouraged to read the Bible and instead blindly accept the traditions of the Roman church. And it could be happening now.

**Exodus 32:26 KJV** Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who *is* on the LORD'S side? *let him come* unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.

I believe that this is why the Levites were given the priesthood. God preserved a remnant. There is always a remnant. The question is: will we be part of that remnant? Will we challenge tradition and compare it to the Word of God to see if it is right or wrong? The only reason we can read the Bible today is because people like Martin Luther challenged tradition.

Take a look at the traditions that you have and study them and see if they line up with what the Bible says. Be a part of the remnant that puts God's Word first.