

Molded Or Beaten Gold

THE GOLDEN CALF

Exodus 32:1-4 – NKJV

32 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, “Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”

² And Aaron said to them, “Break off the golden earrings which *are* in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me.”

³ So all the people broke off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* to Aaron.

⁴ **And he received *the gold* from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf.**

Then they said, “This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!”

THE GOLDEN CALF - MOLDED

Time has passed, ***the children of Israel have moved*** out of the land of captivity and now are a free people.

- **No more** do they have to deal with the torn gashes in their backs from the whips of the taskmasters.
- **No longer** are they having to depend on the Egyptians to give them their food.
- **No longer** do they feel the constant tension and fear that is associated with captivity.

They have seen a mighty God in action.

- He led them out of Egypt after the Passover.
- He calmed their fears at the Red Sea by allowing the waters to drown Pharaoh and his armies.
- Some three months have passed in their lives and they are now in the area of **Mt. Sinai.**
- It is here that **God will call Moses to the mountain top** for a transition in how He wants Israel to follow Him.

A. Biblical Mountain Tops

Biblically there have always been those mountain tops that **brought some symbolism to our walk with God**.

Holy men of old knew the significance of a constant walk and climb with the Lord.

- **Ararat** – ***The mountain of new beginnings.*** First sacrifice offered here.
- **Moriah** – ***The mountain of testing, the victory of faith*** where Jehovah-Jireh supplies every need.
- **Gilead** – ***The mountain of disunity, anger, and grudge*** between brothers.
- **Seir** – ***The mountain of opposition.*** Of an unforgiving spirit.
- **Horeb** – ***The mountain of refreshing water.*** An abundant, overflowing life, strengthened by walking and living on holy ground.
- **Sinai** – ***The mountain of Law*** (Ten Commandments) **and Grace.**
- **Hor** – ***The mountain of unbelief and rebellion against God, death.***
- **Gerizim** – ***The mountain of blessing for obedience.***

There are many others that I could mention.

- **When we reach mountains** in our spiritual experience...
- The proper adjustments need to be made.

Could today be a mountain top experience for you; ***where that you must make the right spiritual adjustments*** to continue your walk with the Lord?

B. Moses Goes to the Mountain

It is from Exodus 19, that we find that **Moses goes up into the mountain.**

God would give Moses the intricate details of the Law.

32:1 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, “Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”

The whole meaning of idolatry is not spiritual ignorance...

- ***But a willful turning away from*** the spiritual knowledge and worship of God.

The people begin to question all sorts of things.

- **Moses** is dead.
- Moses has left us all alone out here.
- Moses has some conspiracy with the Egyptians.
- Moses has left us here to die.

The clamor arose. So the cry rose to Aaron's ears. **Give us a god.**

Aaron, that *fearless man* -

- Who had walked into the courts of Pharaoh -
- The man who warned Pharaoh of the plagues -
- The man who had been the voice for Moses -
- **Called a saint of God** -
- A man who obeyed the will of God without argument
- Listens to the people.....
- The troubling thing is that he leads them in the way of destruction.

He could not stand up to their pressures.

- He begins to buckle under the pressure.
- That allows us to understand one thing.
- **We must not be just half committed to our purpose.**
- We must be wholly committed to God.

C. Lessons From the Golden Calf

Aaron called for all of the gold within the camp.

- A raging fire was built and Aaron began to craft the gold and form a calf.
- He used an engraving tool and poured the gold into a mold and shaped it without any difficulty.

There are many lessons that we can learn from the making of this golden calf.

The Easiness of Sin.

The material was **poured into a mold and shaped** without any trouble.

- It required no originality, no effort of thought
- **Just a memory** of how the calf was in Egypt.
- It came so natural, so easy.

That is the way that sin operates in our lives.

- It often is so subtle in it's approach.
- It just kind of ***fits US***.

- **Absalom** – ***Not really a sin was what the advisors said***. Your dad is just getting a little older and little more out of touch with things and you would be a tremendous king. . . . **It led to his rebellion and his downfall.**
- **Balaam** – ***Not really a sin to curse the people of God*** or so Balak said. Just come down here and eat supper with me and we will pay you well to give us a victory over them. . . . **It led to Balaam making a wicked decision to corrupt the Israelites.**
- **Samson** – ***Not really a sin to go done there and date the girls of the Philistines***. They are so cute and I think that I could win them to the Lord. . . . **It led him to Delilah, to him losing his eyesight, and finally to his death in a heathen temple.**
- **Achan** – ***Not really a sin to pick up this money and this garment***. My family could use the extra resources. Besides nobody is here to see me right now, I can get away with it. . . . **It led him to a horrible death by stoning along with all of his family.**

The easiness of being molded to conform to this world.

While the world says do your own thing, the greatest authority has these words for us:

Romans 12:2 - NKJV

²And **do not be conformed** to this world, but **be transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Never be conformed to this world, to its models, to its desires.

The essence of all sin is to desire to get things in the easiest way

- To run things into molds,
- Rather than to **carve or build them** with slow, patient care.

No one has ever been to a seminar on:

- How to Be a Better Liar
- How to Cheat Your Boss or Customers
- How to Hold a Grudge
- How to Destroy Things with Anger
- How to Sin More Effectively
- The Benefits of Corruption
- The Essence of Immorality

These things just come naturally to unregenerated man.

Paul told us that there are laws that work to prevent us from doing ***the works of the flesh***.

But he went further and said that **there are things of the Spirit** that will not come naturally to us unless we strive for them:

Galatians 5:22-23 - NKJV

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

- Seek those things with all your heart.

Idols Require Little Imagination.

The idol maker places as little of himself as possible into the making of the idol.

- He is not an artist, he is just a mechanic.
- Put it together and let it fall together however it will.
- It lends to sloppiness, it lends to carelessness, it lends to darkness.

Aaron had to add an alloy to the gold, something of inferior value to get the image sharp and clear.

For a while **this is the way that sin accompanies whatever it touches**.

- **The marred, disfiguring of sin** never comes until later.

Sin is regarded as a misfortune demanding pity, not a wilful act drawing down the condemnation.

That is what happens to molded gold, it ultimately will not have near the value that it could have achieved

THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND

Numbers 8:1-4 – NKJV - Arrangement of the Lamps

8 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ² “Speak to Aaron, and say to him, ‘When you arrange the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand.’” ³ And Aaron did so; he arranged the lamps to face toward the front of the lampstand, as the LORD commanded Moses. ⁴ **Now this workmanship of the lampstand was hammered gold**; from its shaft to its flowers it *was* hammered work. According to the pattern which the LORD had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand.

Our second text that we read really encompasses what God desires to do with our lives.

- He desires to take that gold and construct it into His own design.
- God has a design for every life.
- It is only if we are willing to submit to His hands; will any success come.

As we read the text, something appears here that **sets that Lampstand apart** from all the other articles in the Tabernacle.

It is in such **striking contrast to the golden calf** that Aaron constructed.

The thing that is ***idolatrous or according to the mind of man*** can be **so quickly and easily cast into shape**.

But the Lampstand was so different in its orientation.

- It was made of ***“beaten gold.”***
- That which has **most of all glorified God** will always **require a great price**.

The Lampstand was taken from a talent of gold - - -

- In a solid piece and the beauty that came from it,
- came from the hammers of the skilled workman until it became what God required.
- The knobs that extended on the ends of the Lamp were carefully and intricately designed by the craftsman.

A. Lessons From the Lampstand.

1. It Shows the Difficulty of Holiness.

Aaron's calf shows to us the easiness of sin but the *beaten lamp shows us the difficulty of holiness.*

- The Lampstand was *beaten out carefully and slowly* with much toil and pain.

The Lampstand was all handmade, not run through a mold.

- It was the most elaborate
- It represented the result of what all the other vessels typified and led up to,
- ***the Light of the World,***
- Yet it was beaten out of one solid piece of gold.

The workman must have pondered over every detail minutely.

- He spent immense labor and skill on its details.
- In his mind, he had to keep the pattern and symmetry of the whole clearly in his mind,
- While from one mass of metal **he beat out each shaft and floral** ornament.

While it is easy to remain in sin, it is somewhat more difficult for a man to be holy.

But to be something for God, a man has to fashion his life, by the work of his hands and the sweat of his soul, with the help of God, which **we can escape a life of sin.**

A false diamond is molded in glass or paste in just a few minutes; but nature requires **ages of slow, patient workmanship to crystallize the real diamond** from the dark charcoal.

You can cover pressed wood with a veneer or walnut or mahogany at little expense and little effort; but the grain of walnut or mahogany took many years of strain and struggle, while the tree was battling the storms and weathering the droughts.

In this human world, **we can make easy and cheap imitations of *moral and spiritual* qualities, but they will never stand the test of time.**

Saints are made by slow, patient self-discipline, by many prayers, and tears

David at Ornan's threshing floor had these words to say:

1 Chronicles 21:24 - NKJV

²⁴ Then King David said to Ornan, "No, but I will surely buy *it* for the full price, for I will not take what is yours for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings with *that which costs me* nothing."

-My sacrifice must cost me something. I cannot enjoy something that I have not payed for.

THE MAKING OF A SAINT

We are all in varying degrees of becoming what God wants us to become!!!

It was not in an hour that Simon would become Peter.

It was not in a day, that John, the man of thunder, would be transformed into the disciple of love.

In a single instant:

- **JESUS could cleanse a leper.**
- He could open blind eyes.
- He could raise the dead.
- He could calm the seas.

But it would take a thousand, weary instants to transform Peter.

Perhaps on a day when the disciples looked more like wayward children, Jesus would remember one of the plows that he had made.

He would remember how that plow had cut the soil too deeply -

- It had been brought back for some minor adjustments.
- He would remember how the plane had stripped away the wood.
- He would remember the pains necessary to complete the work.

Then he would look to his disciples, in his heart, he would then realize **how much more it would take to shape them, to form them**.

For the transformation of the wood to take place there had to be the active involvement of the Carpenter.

We must see to it that the transformation is a complete work.

- There are so many today who *attempt to serve God with an incomplete transformation*.

Therefore, here is a half-finished chest.

An incomplete chair.

A plow that is missing its handle.

A set of cabinets without doors.

But the Carpenter desired so much more!!!

CLOSE: Romans 12:1 – NKJV - Living Sacrifices to God

12 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service*.

The gold had to submit to the hand of the craftsman.

What is the final test of greatness as viewed by the world?

- **It is not** how we lived in ease or comfort.
- **It is what** is done in the hour of adversity, in the hour of suffering, in the moment of persecution, in the instance of difficulty.

Common circumstances create common people.

Extraordinary circumstances create people who have iron in their soul.

Winston Churchill, a common leader before and after the war, **but during the war**, he was an incredible **man of vision, of innovation, and of action.**

Little souls are dismayed by difficulties, **great souls are awakened by them.** **Difficulties awaken their courage,** stimulate their activities, and marshal their faculties for battle.

Paul withstood slander, misrepresentation, open hostility, and violence.

Yet, those obstacles brought out a resolution within him **that refused to quit.**

The last Sunday sermon that Martin Luther King preached, four days before his assassination, challenged the congregation with these words:

On some positions, cowardice asks the question, is it expedient?

And then expedience comes along and asks the question, is it politic?

Vanity asks the question, is it popular?

Conscience asks the question is it right?

And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor polite, nor popular, but one must take it because it is right.

God's greatest men did not just happen.

- It came in the **long, tearful nights,**
- it came beneath **the weight of some burden,**
- it came at the height of the **great resistance** to their soul.
- **Character was forged in the heat of the furnace.**

1 Corinthians 16:8-9 - CEV

⁸I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹because there is a wonderful opportunity for me to do some work here. But there are also many people who are against me.

Make a covenant with God, that for this day forward, **I am going to work against the spiritual adversaries in my life.**