

THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON

DATE: January 11, 2015

SUBJECT: THE TRAVELS OF THE CHOSEN CHILDREN OF ISRAEL: The Molten Calf

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 24:3, 12-13, 15-18; 32:1-35

AIM: To encourage the children to be bold to stand for the Lord, even if they are the only ones to do so. By standing on the Lord's side, they will be rewarded by the Lord and blessed by Him.

MEMORY VERSES: 1 John 5:21 ("Little children, guard yourselves from idols."); Joshua 1:9b ("... Be strong and take courage; do not be afraid or dismayed. For Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go.")

SUGGESTED SONGS: 1612 (Companions); 146 (I want the Lord to have the first place); 9530 (BSS Vessels Unto Honor-Speak Truth); 10 (Inside Me); 9313 (BSS Daniel- Our God is Living); 9316 (BSS Daniel-What do you do when your friends say); 1602 (Choose God); 1302 (Be Strong).

BACKGROUND: In the last few lessons, we have seen how the God of Israel made Himself known to His people by giving Moses the Ten Commandments. He also revealed that He wanted a home on earth; He wanted Israel to build a tabernacle for Him to dwell in. God also told Moses He wanted priests to serve Him in His house.

NOTE TO SERVING ONES: There are some details in this lesson that are more appropriate for older children. Based on your fellowship and prayer, you will need to determine how much detail is appropriate for your level.

CONTENT: After God told Moses about the Ten Commandments and the ordinances (specific rules and practices), Moses went down to tell the people all the words of Jehovah. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which Jehovah has spoken we will do." Jehovah said to Moses, "Come up to Me at the top of the mountain, and be there; and I will give you the tablets of stone with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction." Moses rose up with Joshua his attendant, and Moses went up to the top of the mountain of God. The glory of Jehovah settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. The appearance of the glory of Jehovah was like consuming fire on the top of the mountain to the eyes of the children of Israel. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

The children of Israel were waiting for him under the mountain. They did not know what had happened to Moses since he was gone so many days, so they asked Aaron to make a god for them. How quickly the children of Israel forgot about the real God who did so much for them! Aaron asked the people to bring their golden rings to him. He took them and made a molten calf with an engraving tool (molten means made by melting). They said, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" (Exodus 32:4b). And when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. They also had a feast to the Lord.

The Lord saw what was happening and spoke to Moses on the mountain, "Go, get down; for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf; and they have worshipped it and have sacrificed to it, and said, This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" (vs. 7-8). God was so angry at the children of Israel, He said "My anger may burn against them and I may consume them...." (10b). Moses entreated the Lord on their behalf. And the Lord repented of the evil which He said He would do to His people.

Moses went down the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony. When he saw the calf and the people dancing, Moses' anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain. He took the golden calf which they had made, burned it with fire, ground it to

powder, scattered it upon the water and made the children of Israel drink it. And Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you that you brought so great a sin upon them?" And Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of my lord burn. You know the people, that they are set on evil; For they said to me, Make gods for us who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him. So I said to them, Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off; so they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and this calf came out."

And when Moses saw that the people were without restraint, he stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Whoever is for Jehovah, come to me." Only the sons of Levi gathered themselves to Moses. And he said to them, "Thus says Jehovah the God of Israel, Let each man put his sword upon his thigh, and go back and forth from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each man kill his brother, and each man his companion, and each man his neighbor" (vs.26-27). And they did according to the word of Moses.

The next day Moses told the people that they had sinned a great sin and that he would go to Jehovah on their behalf. And Moses returned to Jehovah and said, "Oh, this people have committed a great sin and have made gods of gold for themselves. Yet now, if You will forgive their sin - and if not, please blot me out of Your book which You have written." And Jehovah said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book. And now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you. Now My Angel will go before you; nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them." And Jehovah struck the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made.

SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:

- **We should stand for the Lord with our companions.** Out of all of the children of Israel, only the tribe of Levi answered Moses' call and stood on the Lord's side. Because of their stand, they were rewarded with the priesthood. When we stand for the Lord, we will be blessed and rewarded by Him. To stand for the Lord when no one else does can seem difficult, but we should remember that God is with us. That is why it is good to have companions in the Lord so that we can stand together for the Lord.
- **We should give the Lord the first place.** God hates idols. The second commandment is "You shall not make for yourself an idol" (Exo. 20:4). Even after the Lord had done so much for His people, it seemed they so easily turned from Him to worship an idol. We might think that it was unbelievable what the children of Israel did, but we also can easily forget the Lord and worship other things. How often we choose to play games or watch TV rather than spend time memorizing our verses or preparing for the meeting. In the meeting we may pay more attention to our new clothes or a toy we stuck into our meeting bag than to the lesson. These things may not be bad but whenever they occupy too much of our time and energy, they become idols. We must guard our hearts from things coming in to take the place of the Lord.
- **We should not take God's commandments for granted.** The Lord loves us very much, but He will punish us (through our parents and/or other authorities) whenever we disobey His commandments in order to teach us to be obedient, good and moral citizens in the world. Choices have consequences. We should pray to the Lord before making our choices. Let the word of God be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path (Psalm 119:105).
- **We should listen to our conscience.** When Moses asked Aaron what he had done, Aaron answered by lying rather than taking responsibility for his actions. Sometimes we may try to cover up the truth or tell a white lie so that we don't get into trouble. But one lie will often lead to others. Sometimes we may accuse others in order to avoid punishment. But we should learn to follow our conscience. The more we pay attention to our conscience, the more sensitive our conscience will become.

Adapted from the Church in New York City's Children's meeting lessons: 10/16/88; 01/07/96; 1/4/04; 1/17/10