

# Rebels, Cowards, and a Golden Calf

Exodus 21-32

## Introduction

We are continuing our study through the Bible today, and are currently in the Old Testament book of Exodus. We are studying the entire Bible because of two basic principles. Paul wrote to his son in the faith in II Timothy, chapter 3, verses 16 and 17, saying,

*All scripture is inspired by God . . .*

So principle number one, we believe that all of scripture is authoritative; it is all inerrant; it is all from God as its source. We will therefore, study all of it.

Paul continues, in those verses, to say that all of scripture, for everyone, is,

*. . . profitable . . . for every good work.*

So principle number two, we believe not only that all of scripture is entirely true, but all of scripture is entirely profitable. The burden of proof, men and women, lies upon us to discover its profitability.

If we come to a passage, like Exodus, chapter 20, that may not strike us as very profitable, it is up to us to study and discover. So, as we begin going through the Old Testament, we are persistent because we believe that it is not only God's word, it is not only entirely true, but it is entirely profitable.

Now, we studied the Ten Commandments and that leads us to what is now considered the "Book of the Covenant". The scripture in Exodus from chapter 23 and on, seems to be hard to understand – and rightly so. In fact, a lot of the scripture that we are studying is not applicable to the New Testament believer in its literal form.

God is dealing with the New Testament church in a way that is somewhat different than the way He dealt with the nation Israel. Yet, there are principles to be discovered in these chapters that are timeless. That is why the writer of the New Testament scripture said that it is all profitable. There are timeless truths that are to be applied to our lives today.

## The Law Given

Now, it is an interesting note to realize that before 1902, most modern critics believed that Exodus,

chapters 20 through 23, were written at a much later time or closer to our time period. They believed that there was no way primitive man, that they consider to be evolving, could have such a highly formalized and structured system of law. However, in 1902, the discovery of what is known as the Code of Hammurabi was made. It was a seven foot statue that gave over three hundred paragraphs of formulated law related to social, civil, and moral behavior. This code preceded Moses by three hundred years.

Then, another code was discovered. This one was written by the Assyrians on clay tablets and preceded Moses by a thousand years. So, the ridiculous thought of no formal system of law among primitive man was put to rest.

With or without that evidence, this scripture is written from God. And we know that neither man nor man's social structure is evolving into a better or more intelligent state.

We believe that the law of entropy affects society as well, in that men become worse, not better. Men become less intelligent, not more intelligent. It is the law of sin that decays everything on our planet, including ourselves. So what we are looking at is an incredibly intense formulation of law that God would use to tell Israel, "This is how you are to live."

## Three timeless principles

Now from the passages of scripture in Exodus chapters 20 through 23, I want to give three timeless truths or principles.

### God is committed to establishing justice

1. Principle number one, God is committed to establishing justice.

Turn to Exodus, chapter 22, verses 5 and 6. We will just look at a couple of verses concerning this principle.

*If a man lets a field or vineyard be grazed bare and lets his animal loose so that it grazes in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and*

*the best of his own vineyard. If a fire breaks out and spreads to thorn bushes, so that stacked grain or the standing grain or the field itself is consumed, he who started the fire shall surely make restitution.*

These make absolute common sense. It is a just system; it is a fair system.

In that day, there were no fences, so the animals grazed where they would. The owner was to take care of his own animal, so that it did not eat grain or anything else that belonged to another.

If someone started a fire that spread and destroyed the property of a neighbor, they were to make restitution. They were not to go to court and declare that it really was not their fault, and that their neighbor should not have had his grain there, and if he had been a little more careful, it would not have burned, and you know how it goes. No, in that day, it was quite simple.

In the kingdom, by the way, it is going to be quite simple as well. God will rule with the same equity and the same justice.

### **God is intent on developing faith**

2. Principle number two, God is intent on developing faith.

Look at verses 10 through 11a of chapter 23. God is intent on this “Book of the Covenant” establishing or developing faith.

*You shall sow your land for six years and gather in its yield, but on the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow . . .*

Now we could stop at this because God is saying, “I want you to plant and to harvest for six years and on the seventh year, you are to leave it alone; you are to let it lie dormant or fallow.”

God would later say that *He* will allow the grain to grow on the seventh year – you just had to trust Him.

Now it would be awfully hard for a farmer, who had been planting for six years, to trust God and stop planting in the seventh year. So, what is God doing? He is desiring to establish, through this “Book of the Covenant,” faith in Him.

An indirect result of that faith would be compassion. Look at the last part of verse 11.

*. . . so that the needy of your people may eat; and whatever they leave the beast of the field may eat. You are to do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove.*

So, an indirect result of this was that the poor could take and eat freely.

### **God is serious about sustaining fellowship among Jews**

3. The third principle is that God is serious in this “Book of the Covenant” about sustaining fellowship among the Jews.

Look at verse 4 of chapter 23.

*If you meet your enemy’s ox or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him.*

Now, in that day, an ox or a donkey was as important as your set of wheels is today. They depended on it; they needed it. So, if you discovered your “enemy’s ox or donkey,” you were to return it to him – even your enemy’s.

Continue to verse 5.

*If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying helpless under its load, . . .*

(. . . you are to walk by it and say, “Serves you right . . .” – oh, excuse me),

*. . . you shall refrain from leaving it to him, you shall surely release it with him.*

I like this because God is instituting, through this covenant, laws that would keep fellowship; laws that would sustain and engender fellowship. God does not have to worry about you helping your friends, you are going to do that. If you saw your friend’s donkey, you would say, “Oh, this is so-and-so’s donkey. Well, I’m going to leave right now and return it.”

This verse, however, says that you find your enemy’s donkey. What would happen? Just imagine with me. You come to your enemy’s house with his donkey, and say, “I saw your donkey wandering and I want to return it to you.”

How much of an enemy can you have when that happens? God was putting into effect, laws of reconciliation. By serving your enemy, you no longer have an enemy; you develop a friend. *That*, ladies and gentlemen, is timeless; it is true for today, as well.

## **The Law Accepted**

Now, in Exodus, chapter 24, verse 3, Moses comes down from the mountain. He reads before the people, all of the Law, which includes, by the way, the Ten Commandments – that is part of the “Book of the Covenant”. Look at verse 3, and note the uses of the word “all”.

*Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the Lord and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do!”*

Remember that *all* of the people said they would do *all* that the Lord said because later, that is going to be significant. They hear the Law; they hear the ordinances, and with *one* voice, they *all*, the entire nation of millions of people, say, “We will obey *all* of it.”

So, the Covenant is ratified, just a short distance from Mount Sinai, where the cloud of God is hovering in it is majesty.

## Two points concerning the “Book of the Covenant”

Let me give two points concerning this “Book of the Covenant” before we go further.

### God’s holiness is revealed

1. First, the overall importance of this is that God’s holiness is revealed.

When you take the time, men and women, to read the “Book of the Covenant,” you think, “God is demanding that which is His own attribute – purity; holiness.”

I think that was one of the primary reasons it was given – to establish; to reveal the holiness of God.

### Man’s inability to keep the Covenant, without God, is revealed

2. Secondly, the “Book of the Covenant” reveals the inability of men to keep it.

It is this Law that will condemn. As you read these laws, if you were an Israelite, or as you read the laws that we have given to us today, by the character of God through His scripture, we cannot keep them.

So first, the Law reveals God’s holiness. And secondly, it reveals our inability to keep it and the necessity for someone to pay for the guilt of our breaking the Law.

What a tremendous backdrop the book is because He will move from this book into giving Moses the directions to build the tabernacle. What is the tabernacle? It is the system whereby their sins were covered; it is the sacrificial system. How timely.

So, the Covenant then, is ratified.

## The Law Broken

Now let us look at what happens at the very end of Moses’ trip to the mountain. Turn to chapter 32 of Exodus. The Law was given, the Law was accepted . . . and the Law was broken.

### Hebrew’s unbelief

Look at verse 1 of chapter 32. Moses, by the way, has been up on Mount Sinai for forty days.

*Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, “Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”*

Now they are about to break what they have just pledged with their lips. Turn back to chapter 20, which is part of the “Book of the Covenant”. We refer to it as the Ten Laws, or the Ten Words, or the Ten Commandments. Look at verse 3.

*You shall have no other gods before Me.*

There is a period at the end of that command. You shall have no other gods before Me – period.

Continue to verses 4 and 5.

*You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God . . .*

Then look again at chapter 24, verse 3b. When Moses read this to the people,

*. . . all the people answered with one voice [unanimity] and said, “All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do!”*

In other words, all the people said, “We will obey.”

Now, when Moses has been away for forty days, they are saying, “Let’s make an idol.”

## Aaron's cowardice

Notice not only the Hebrew's unbelief, but the cowardice of Aaron. Look at verse 2 of Exodus, chapter 32.

*Aaron said to them, "Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."*

This is interesting. The word "ring" could be translated "amulet," which indicates that the people have already dabbled. An amulet was a superstitious thing that they probably got from Egypt. They believed that by wearing this ring or ornament, danger would be kept from their lives. It was like believing in a lucky rabbit's foot.

Many expositors that I have read believe, and I agree, that Aaron is trying to stall. He is thinking, in his own logic, "If I tell them to give up their lucky rabbit's feet, they will say, 'No, you're asking too much,' and it will keep them from idolatry."

However, notice what verse 3 says, almost without a hiccup.

*Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron.*

The people said, "Hey, I don't need this. Here . . ."

Continue to verse 4a.

*He took this from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf; . . .*

He made a solid gold, perhaps, calf. The word "calf" is the word "egel," which literally means, "a young bull in its first strength."

This goes back to a time before Egypt. The people of Israel had seen the Egyptian gods fall by the plagues of God, so this goes back to an earlier time involving a Canaanite practice. The Canaanites practiced bull worship or Baalism. They believed that the bull represented the greatest strength in the universe; the greatest power. So the people, obviously, would not settle for anything less than that which represented the greatest power in the universe. So Aaron shaped a young bull that was perhaps, three years of age.

Then Aaron says, in the last part of verse 4, perhaps meaning a representation of Yahweh,

*. . . "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt."*

Continue to verse 5.

*Now when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to [Yahweh] the Lord."*

Now this is interesting. I do not think Aaron is getting caught up in the idolatry. So, what he is trying to do, is take something evil, surrounded by something good, and hopefully keep his life. In his mind, he says, "We're going to make a bull that represents divine power and tomorrow shall be a feast to Yahweh. We're still going to recognize Yahweh, but we're going to recognize Him through this calf."

The calf could have been as tall as myself. We get the idea that it is a little thing. However, all of the millions of people gave their gold rings. When that many rings are melted down, the calf or bull would be of a great size.

I think Aaron is fudging; he is a coward. He should have stood and said, "Do you remember that we declared we would obey the Law? Do you remember that we declared that we would not make an idol that represents Yahweh?"

Because of Aaron's cowardice, the people are now in deep trouble. Even Aaron cannot stop it now.

## Corporate idolatry

Look at verse 6 of Exodus, chapter 32. The people can hardly wait.

*So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.*

The word "play," in the Hebrew, means, "caress". It is a word that refers to physical intimacy.

Men and women, as hideous as it is to realize, these people, who forty days earlier said, "Oh God, we will follow all of the ordinances that you have given us," now are involved in an incredible orgy, outside, in sight of Mount Sinai, where they can still look up and see the cloud of God. They are engaged in revelry before the golden calf.

Skip to verse 9. Note the last phrase.

*The Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate*

*people. Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation."*

### **Moses' response**

Now imagine that you are Moses. You have been belittled by these people. You have been slandered by these people. They have refused to follow you. You have had it up to here with them. Now, God says, "Say, Moses, let My anger burn against them and I'll wipe them out. Then, I'll make of you another great nation. I'll start all over again."

What would you say? You would probably say, "Let's start right now."

However, we are going to discover that Moses is a man of incredible patience and compassion.

Think about this. Parents with one-year-olds or two-year-olds; parents with thirteen-year-olds or sixteen-year-olds, perhaps because of all the frustrations in your life, you have had it up to here. Then, God says to you, "I'll take them away and I'll start off with a brand new, fresh slate."

Every parent, and do not look at me like that, would say, "Let's do it – right now."

Moses, however, intercedes. Look at verse 11.

*Then Moses entreated the Lord his God, and said, "O Lord, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?"*

Skip to verse 13a.

*Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, "I will multiply your descendants . . ."*

This is the Abrahamic Covenant. Continue to verse 14. Because of Moses' intercession, it seems,

*. . . the Lord changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people.*

Because Moses goes before God with great compassion and says, "No, I want these people. I don't want to throw in the towel on them. I will continue leading them and I will pray."

In fact, Moses will later say, "If possible, blot me out and keep them alive."

Can you believe that? What compassion.

Now, verse 14 is a problem because we think, "Uh-oh, God changed His mind."

The ten cent word for this is "anthropomorphism" or "anthropopathism". That is impressive, isn't it? I cannot say these myself. These words mean that we view God through human terms. In other words, we think of God and we write about God as if God were like us.

Let me try to explain it with an example. My wife and I have a two-and-a-half year old daughter. She will turn thirteen eventually. I cannot stop that from happening. She will probably ask me, "Dad, can I date?"

I am going to say, "No."

Now, if you were an outside party and you heard that conversation, you could leave with the attitude that my mind is made up that she will never date. But I know, in my mind, that when she turns twenty, she may be able to date. If you came back later and saw her as a twenty year old and dating, you would think I had changed my mind. I, however, knew already.

We cannot turn God into a fickle person. He is sovereign. He *knows*. At this point in the passage, it seems as if He has changed His mind, but He has not.

## **The Law Upheld**

Now we are going to see Moses come back and uphold the Law.

### **Drinking the ashes**

Look at verse 19 of Exodus, chapter 32.

*It came about, as soon as Moses came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing; and Moses' anger burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain.*

This is usually perceived of Moses as being an act of anger. I think it is more than that. It is not only anger, but he is giving them an illustration that their fellowship is shattered; their Covenant is shattered. The "Book of the Covenant" that represents what they must do to follow God, is now broken into a hundred pieces.

Notice verse 20.

*He took the calf which they had made and burned it with fire, and ground it to powder,*

***and scattered it over the surface of the water, and made the sons of Israel drink it.***

I would hate to have him for a high school principal!

There is an interesting passage in Numbers, chapter 5, that is called the “adultery test”. Let me review that for you. It is a fascinating passage. A man who believed that his wife had committed adultery would take her to the priest. The priest would take ashes from the floor of the tabernacle, sprinkle them in a glass of water, and make her drink it. If she swelled up and died, that was proof that she was guilty. If nothing happened, that was proof that she was innocent. It was called the “adultery test” or “jealousy test”.

That is what Moses is employing here, so understand this picture. The nation Israel has just committed adultery. They have been following another god. So Moses employs the “adultery test” and has them drink the ashes from the calf. There will be perhaps, three thousand or more who die because of it. I think Moses is deciding, by God’s own hand, who has committed this adultery, or this idolatry. That is the picture.

### **Rebuking Aaron**

Now, in verse 21, it really gets intense. Remember that Moses and Aaron are brothers.

***Then Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you, that you have brought such great sin upon them?”***

Continue to verse 22. Aaron answers just like a brother, “What are you so mad about?”

***Aaron said, “Do not let the anger of my lord burn; you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil.”***

I never really understood this encounter, until I remembered, as I studied it, a childhood incident that happened to me and involved my older brother. Perhaps this example will help your understanding of this confrontation.

I still remember my fourth grade class and my teacher, whose name was Miss Jolly. I would like to know where teachers get their names! By the way, if your name is Jolly, it is a wonderful name. However, my teacher’s name had absolutely no influence on her personality. I am certain you understand what I mean!

We were in an elementary school that had a gymnasium in the center. Around the gymnasium were doorways leading into the classrooms. So, if you were ever sent out of the room, it was a very precarious position because people could see you from every one of the classrooms. I happened to have brothers in school with me and I vividly remember one such occasion.

I had a good friend, Bobby. We were inseparable. He is now Robert and leads one of the largest Christian camps in Virginia. He was always getting me into trouble! In fourth grade, we were sent out of the classroom for doing something. That meant we would get a hack, as we called it, or a spanking. This was in the day when teachers could give you the old backhand with a wooden paddle. For me, that represented great danger because my parent’s rule was that if I got a spanking at school, I got a spanking at home.

Did you have parents like that? I will probably do the same thing with my children.

Now, if we got a spanking at school and did not tell our parents and they found out, through a brother, we got a spanking from Mom, and immediately following that, a spanking from Dad. It is amazing I turned out halfway normal with all of that pressure, right?

So, Bobby and I were standing outside the classroom door and were trying to remain very still because if we moved, we would attract attention from all the other classrooms. I remember seeing movement to my right where the fifth grade class was. Here comes my older brother and his best friend, who was my best friend’s older brother. I was rather clever, even as a fourth grader, and said to Bobby, “Let’s go to the water fountain.”

We went to the water fountain and were going to fake it. Our brothers caught up with us. I can still remember my brother, who, even then, was very perceptive and pastors a church today, saying, “What are you doing out here?”

I probably said something like, “Are you blind? I’m getting a drink of water.”

I can remember him thinking, “Sure.”

At that moment, here comes Miss Jolly with a paddle in her hand. She says, “Stephen, Bobby, follow me.”

Our brothers were grinning like Cheshire cats!

I spent the first half of our forty-five minute bus ride home trying to convince my brother that I was innocent. That did not work. So, I spent the last half of the ride trying to plead with him, “Don’t tell Mom and Dad.”

It seemed to work, until we sat down at the dinner table. I can still remember my brother saying, “Stephen has something to say to you.”

Because I had not told them, I got both spankings.

I can better understand now, when I read of this brother who has been caught, and Moses comes along and says, “What are you doing?”

Note Aaron’s full explanation, in verses 22 through 24. He is really trying to blame the people.

*. . . you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil. For they said to me, “Make a god for us who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” 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 out came this calf.*

I can just hear him say, “Come on, Moses, don’t tell God on me. I’m innocent.”

It did not work. In fact, the text tells us that Moses completely ignored him.

### **Executing idolaters**

Moses then begins to execute the idolaters. He says, in verse 26, in that classic speech in this chapter,

*Whoever is for the Lord, come to me!*

At that point in time, there was only one tribe that came – the Levites. Because of that, they would be given the priestly system or the charge of the priesthood. This is where it all began.

Moses then carries out the Law and according to the Covenant, executes those who had committed idolatry.

## **Application – Three Tests for the Israelites . . . and Us**

Now let us apply this. The Israelites faced three tests and so do we.

### **The test of patience**

1. The first test is the test of patience.

Turn to I Corinthians, chapter 10. Paul is writing of the Old Testament accounts of Moses and the people of Israel to the New Testament church. Look at verses 6 through 12.

*Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.*

*Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play.”*

*Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day.*

*Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents.*

*Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.*

*Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*

*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.*

In other words, “If you don’t think that you can be guilty of idolatry; if you don’t think that you can be guilty of immorality; if you don’t think that you can be guilty of grumbling, take heed that you do not fall.”

The next two verses, verses 13 and 14, are in context with this test.

*No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*

*Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.*

The first test is the test of patience.

Let me explain. I think this was the test of living biblically without biblical blessings. The twentieth century church has a terrible time with this. It is being patient with God, even when it does not seem that He is coming through for us. It is living biblically without blessings.

The Israelites faced a test – it was forty days. Now let us be honest, if we were an Israelite, we would have also thought, “Is Moses not coming back? Forty days is a long time.”

Have you ever waited forty days for an answer from God? That is a long time. Finally, they got to the point at which they believed that even God had perhaps, deserted them, as I will explain in a moment, and they failed this test.

I think we also need to understand that the Israelites were headed for the promised land. They had been promised a land flowing with milk and honey where they would create a great nation. All of this blessing was promised, but now, “What are we doing out here in the wilderness beside this rock? And forty days of absence and silence – it’s not worth it. Thanks, God, I’ll take *my* life back into *my* own hands and *I’ll* run it from now on.”

I think this is the same trial that may knock on the door of a single gal or guy who waits patiently, believing God has a husband or wife for them. Because of the wait, however, the standards start to come down.

This may be the same test knocking on the door of a businessman or woman who works with a principle or an ethic of honesty and it does not really seem to pay off.

It is the trial of patience that they failed. It is living for God when God does not seem to pay up.

Men and women, write this question down for yourself. The question is this, “Can I live for God without blessings from God?”

Can you?

### **The test of purity**

2. The second test is the test of purity.

Obviously, the Israelites failed this test. The failure of this test will usually follow the failure of the test of patience, by the way. In other words, if I get to the point in my life in which I think God is silent; that He is not coming through, and I take the reins out of His hands and put them back in my hands, where do you think I will lead my life? Toward purity? Absolutely not. I will lead my life toward impurity.

I think of Joseph. If there was ever a man who was facing the test of patience, it was he. He was abandoned, alone, and climbing, because of his personality and integrity, a ladder, as it were.

Potiphar’s house is sort of the top rung where he is in charge of the entire household. However, he has still had no word from God or home. Then, there comes a “tap tap” on his door, in the form of Potiphar’s wife. She says, “Hey, why not? Is living life like you’re living really paying off?”

Joseph passed the test of purity. The Israelites failed it.

### **The test of faith**

3. Thirdly, there is a test of faith.

This is one that captivated me, as I studied. Understand that all the evidences of God had been removed. What evidences did they have? They had two, up to this point. They had Moses, who was the voice of God, and they had the cloud that had been leading them as they left Egypt.

“Now where is the cloud?”

“On top of that mountain over there.”

“Where is Moses?”

“We don’t know. We think he’s over there too.”

The question for us is, “Will I serve God without evidences of God?”

This goes right along with the first trial, the trial of patience. So, “Will I follow God if He does not give me tangible expression that I am really following God and He really is there? Can I trust Him when I can’t see Him?”

Moses’ words were not enough. He had given them the “Book of the Covenant”. These words are not enough today, men and women. We have these words today, that are the expression of God.

I think of Jesus Christ’s words to Thomas. Remember that Thomas said, in John, chapter 20, verse 25,

*. . . Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.*

Jesus, in John, chapter 20, verse 29, without rebuking, basically said to Thomas, “Here look.”

Jesus then said the captivating words,

*. . . Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.*

The test of faith is faith that is, as Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 1b, tells us,

*. . . the evidence of things not seen.*

There are the tests of patience, of purity, and of faith. If we fail these tests and we live in a manner that consistently abandons God because we cannot see Him, or trust Him, or believe Him, or have evidences from Him, or receive blessings from Him, we will fall into the same things the Israelites did. We will become immoral. We will become impatient. We will become critical. We will, in fact, live our lives as if God did not live.

In a day when there are so many idols, so many pursuits that turn our attention away from a living God who is there, I trust, by His grace, we can live without creating golden calves.