



Molded Or Beaten Gold

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Exodus 32:1-4 – “And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.” “And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.” “And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.” “And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”

Numbers 8:1-4 – “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,” “Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick.” “And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as the LORD commanded Moses.” “And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had shewed Moses, so he made the candlestick.”

I. INTRODUCTION – THE GOLDEN CALF

- -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. (Gen. 8:4; Romans 12:1-2)
- Moriah – The mountain of testing, the victory of faith where Jehovah-Jireh supplies every need. (Gen. 22:2-14; 1 Peter 4:12-14; Php. 4:19)
- Gilead – The mountain of disunity, anger, and grudge between brothers. (Gen. 31:25, 42-52)
- Seir – The mountain of opposition. Of an unforgiving spirit (Gen. 36:8-9; Num. 20:14-21) Esau and his descendants never forgave Jacob for inheriting the birthright.
- Horeb – The mountain of refreshing water. An abundant, overflowing life, strengthened by walking and living on holy ground (Exodus 3:1-5; 17:6; 1 Kings 19:8; John 7:37-38)
- Sinai – The mountain of Law (Ten Commandments) and Grace (The Tabernacle), the Law being a schoolmaster which leads to Christ (Exodus 19:20; 20:1-17; 24:15-25:9; Galatians 4)
- Hor – The mountain of unbelief and rebellion against God, death (Numbers 20:7-29). In Aaron’s case, he could have been “sin unto death”, a premature death (1 John 5:16).
- Gerizim – The mountain of blessing for obedience (Deut. 11:29; 27:12; Eph. 1:3)
- There are many others that one could mention. But the trend appears from these that when we reach mountains in our spiritual experience, the proper adjustments need to be made.

- Could today have been 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 – Exodus 19

- It is from Exodus 19, that we find that Moses goes up into the mountain. Thunder and lightning, thick clouds and a voice that was as loud as a great trumpet were all present with his journey. The ground trembled and shook. It was the beginning of the time that God would spend give Moses the intricate details of the Law.

Exodus 32:1 – “And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is 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. Men are often so impatient with the hand of God in their lives. No matter where men are in time, they will have gods to worship. 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 and 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. Secondly, the people should never make demands on a pastor that they know run against his convictions.
- Outrunning the boundaries of a spiritual leader can create nothing but golden calves. The golden calves will not only damage this generation but the one beyond this one.

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.

1. 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 the lives of men. It often is so subtle in its approach. It just kind of fits men.

- 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 down 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.
- Ahab – Not really a sin to take this vineyard of Naboth. I am the king and there should be some respect to my

desires. Naboth does not need this vineyard. . . . It led him to rationalize away and he became guilty of murder for a piece of land. . . . But there was an archer that drew his bow at a venture and that arrow found the mark.

- 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 – “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye 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.
- Last Monday, (Nov. 16, 1998) I was at work when a group of high school students from Rehobeth High School came through. I was asked by our department director to spend a little time telling them what all that we worked with. So I started explaining to them what happens during a catheterization and how to do angioplasty and place stents, etc. They looked so shaped by the nineties. The Grunge Look had them. Pale faces with dark make-up, pierced eyebrows, pierced everything else. It was then that I realized that we are not the crazy ones, they are!!!! Keep living a life of holiness. Resist the mold of the devil and of sin.
- 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 hew or build them with slow, patient toil and 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 – “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,” “Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”
- Seek those things with all your heart.

2. 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.
- The little imagination that is required to sin causes people to not take thought or trouble to do what is right, then circumstances are blamed for their failure. When they do not resist temptation, they say they could not help themselves.
- 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

II. THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND

Numbers 8:1-4 – “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,” “Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick.” “And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as the LORD commanded Moses.” “And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had shewed Moses, so he made the candlestick.”

- -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 to us.
- -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, because 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. Molds for his sin lie about, ready at hand, without any trouble.
- -But to be something for God, a man has to fashion his life, as it were, by the toil of his hands and the sweat of his soul, with the help of God, the means of which he can escape a life of sin and folly.
- -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, tears, and toils.
- -David at Ornan’s threshing floor had these words to say:
- 1 Chronicles 21:24 – “And king David said to Ornan, Nay; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take that which is thine for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings without cost.”

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

III. THE MAKING OF A SAINT

- -We are all in varying degrees of becoming what God wants us to become (or we should be).
- -The Picture from the Carpenter's Shop proves to us best how the Lord can make our lives.
- -The request would come from the farmer for the plow. The farmer perhaps looking for a little reprieve from the work of his fields, would sit on a nail keg in the carpenter's shop. He would try to watch the Carpenter at his craft. Finally, the Carpenter, would tell him, not in agitation, nor in rebuke, but simply in a conversational way, "Friend, my plows are not made while you wait. It is a long and weary business making plows. See that tree, I have to transform that tree into your plow. Who can tell what faults and flaws lie in the wood? Leave me alone. I have to wrestle with the wood."
- -His material was rude and unyielding but the Carpenter learned that both pain and patience goes into the transformation. The Carpenter would become engrossed in his work, in his creation. The one who framed the worlds would frame our lives.
- -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:
 - He 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 and 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.
- *Romans 12:1 -- "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto 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 men. Extraordinary circumstances create men who have iron in their soul.
- Winston Churchill, a common leader before and after the war, but during the war when his mettle was tested, 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 – “But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.” “For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.”
- Make a covenant with God, that for this day forward, I am going to work against the spiritual adversaries in my life.