**Exodus 31-33**

Bezalel and Oholiab

**31**Then the Lord said to Moses, **2**“See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, **3**and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills - **4**to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, **5**to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts. **6**Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given ability to all the skilled workers to make everything I have commanded you: **7**the tent of meeting, the ark of the covenant law with the atonement cover on it, and all the other furnishings of the tent - **8**the table and its articles, the pure gold lampstand and all its accessories, the altar of incense, **9**the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, the basin with its stand - **10**and also the woven garments, both the sacred garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons when they serve as priests, **11**and the anointing oil and fragrant incense for the Holy Place. They are to make them just as I commanded you.”

The Sabbath

**12**Then the Lord said to Moses, **13**“Say to the Israelites, ‘You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the Lord, **who makes you holy**.

**14**“‘Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it is to be put to death; those who do any work on that day must be cut off from their people. **15**For six days work is to be done, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day is to be put to death. **16**The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. **17**It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’”

**18**When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant law, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

The Golden Calf

**32**When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.”

**2**Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” **3**So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. **4**He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

**5**When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.” **6**So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

**7**Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. **8**They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, ‘These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’

**9**“I have seen these people,” the Lord said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people. **10**Now leave ME alone so that MY anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.”

**11**But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God. “Lord,” he said, “why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? **12**Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth’? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people.**13**Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: ‘I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.’” **14**Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

**15**Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands. They were inscribed on both sides, front and back. **16**The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

**17**When Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting, he said to Moses, “There is the sound of war in the camp.”

**18**Moses replied:

“It is not the sound of victory,  
    it is not the sound of defeat;  
    it is the sound of singing that I hear.”

**19**When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. **20**And he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.

**21**He said to Aaron, “What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?”

**22**“Do not be angry, my lord,” Aaron answered. “You know how prone these people are to evil. **23**They said to me, ‘Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.’ **24**So I told them, ‘Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.’ Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!”

**25**Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies.**26**So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, “Whoever is for the Lord, come to me.” And all the Levites rallied to him.

**27**Then he said to them, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.’” **28**The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died. **29**Then Moses said, “You have been set apart to the Lord today, for you were against your own sons and brothers, and he has blessed you this day.”

**30**The next day Moses said to the people, “You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.”

**31**So Moses went back to the Lord and said, “Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. **32**But now, please forgive their sin - but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.”

**33**The Lord replied to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book. **34**Now go, lead the people to the place I spoke of, and my angel will go before you. However, when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin.” **35**And the Lord struck the people with a plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.

**33**Then the Lord said to Moses, “Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’**2**I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. **3**Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way.”

**4**When the people heard these distressing words, they began to mourn and no one put on any ornaments. **5**For the Lord had said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites, ‘You are a stiff-necked people. If I were to go with you even for a moment, I might destroy you. Now take off your ornaments and I will decide what to do with you.’” **6**So the Israelites stripped off their ornaments at Mount Horeb.

The Tent of Meeting

**7**Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the “tent of meeting.” Anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. **8**And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. **9**As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the Lord spoke with Moses. **10**Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to their tent. **11**The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.

Moses and the Glory of the Lord

**12**Moses said to the Lord, “You have been telling me, ‘Lead these people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, ‘I know you by name and you have found favor with me.’ **13**If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.”

**14**The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

**15**Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. **16**How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

**17**And the Lord said to Moses, “I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.”

**18**Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”

**19**And the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. **20**But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”

**21**Then the Lord said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. **22**When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. **23**Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”