

Kids' Chronicle

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BY CINDY BASSETT

The Hebrews break their covenant with God

More than a month had passed since the Hebrews saw God's power on Mount Sinai. Now, when they looked up at the huge peaks rising above them in the desert, they saw nothing. And it was silent.

"Where is Moses?" the people asked Moses' brother, Aaron. "He's been up on the mountain a long time."

"My brother promised that he would come back as soon as he finished hearing all of God's messages for us," Aaron said.

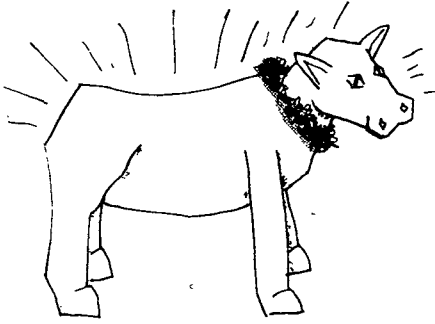
"Well it looks to me as though they have both forgotten all about us," someone interrupted.

"Moses has been our leader since we first left our slavery in Egypt," Aaron continued. "He wouldn't do that."

"It's up to you now, Aaron," another member of the group urged him. "Find someone else to lead us to our new home."

Aaron was impatient, too, but something else was bothering him as well. He was the older of the two brothers. Why should Moses have all of the importance by being their leader? Here was Aaron's chance.

"Before we left Egypt, the people there gave us golden jewelry," Aaron told them. "Collect the ear-



rings from everyone in the camp and bring them back here to me."

After they had gone, Aaron made a huge fire. Soon, the flames were hot enough to melt all of the earrings.

A large crowd gathered by the bonfire and watched as Aaron skillfully fashioned the molten gold into a huge bull. When the people saw the bull gleaming brightly they chanted: "Here is the god who led us out of our slavery in Egypt!"

Aaron announced: "Tomorrow we will hold a celebration in honor of our new god."

People started coming to the party even before the sun had risen. Everyone bowed down before the bull standing on the altar Aaron built. They even offered sacrifices to it.

Meanwhile, Moses was still on the mountain. After he told God that the Hebrews wanted to be his special people, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. These laws were engraved on two stone tablets.

"Moses, it would be best if you went back down to the camp now," God told him. "The people have already forgotten their promise to obey me. They are worshipping a golden bull as their god."

Moses was shocked and turned quickly to leave. "There's something else, Moses," the Lord added.

"Because they have done this, I am going to destroy them all. Now only your descendants will become my special people."

"Lord, please forgive them!" Moses cried. "I agree that they are a disobedient people. But if you do this, the Egyptians will believe you only freed the Hebrews from slavery so you could lead them out into the desert and kill them."

Because of Moses' prayer, the Lord changed his mind. So Moses hurried back down to the Hebrew camp still holding the two heavy stone tablets.

As he approached, he saw people singing and dancing in a wild frenzy around the bull. So without saying a single word, Moses threw the tablets toward the foot of the mountain, shattering them.

"How could you do this?" Moses shouted. "You witnessed God's miracles while you were still Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt! And he has guided and cared for you as you travel to the new home he promised!"

The people were shamed to guilty silence. Moses turned to his brother, crying, "I left you in charge! How could you do this?"

"I'm not really sure how it all happened," Aaron mumbled. "After I put the golden earrings into the fire, the bull came out!"

Without another word, Moses took the golden bull and ground it down into a fine powder. Then he sprinkled this powder into water and made everyone drink the bitter mixture.

And the Hebrews finally realized what a terrible thing they had done against God.

Read more about it in chapter 32 of the Book of Exodus.

The Bible Times

SINAI PENINSULA, 1445 B.C. — Religious experts today explained that 400 years of Egyptian captivity provide the background for ongoing events among the Hebrews camped at the foot of this desert mountain.

Since their flight from Egypt, the band of Hebrews had been led by the prophet Moses, who recently disappeared up the mountain during a strange storm. Fearing Moses had abandoned them, the Hebrews built a golden bull and began to worship it in wild celebration.

Experts observed that the Hebrews' Egyptian captors had worshiped many gods. Their religion also held that the Egyptian king, the Pharaoh, was a descendant of Ra, the sun god.



A S D F G H J K L P O I U Y Y T R T Q W E R

Word Scramble

It took a long time to convince stubborn Pharaoh to release the Hebrew slaves. Before the Pharaoh finally did so, God had to perform a whole series of miracles. Unscramble the miracles listed below and write the letters on the lines. Then put the circled letters together to name all of the miracles. (Answers on page 14.)

J	VOAPSRES	○	_____
K	L O D O B	○	_____
L	SENKRSAD	○	_____
G	W G F S O R	○	_____
H	E S T L U C O S	○	_____
I	R S E L F I	○	_____
J	T O S L I B	○	_____

HIDDEN WORD: _____
N B V C X W E R T Y U I O P A S D F G H J K

????????????????

Bible Trivia

- ? How many miracles did God perform in Egypt before Pharaoh finally agreed to let the Hebrew slaves go? ?
- ? Send answers to: Catholic Courier Bible Trivia, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your name and address with your entry. ?
- ? All entries must be received by Feb. 14, 1992. A winner will be selected at random from all correct entries submitted. He or she will be notified by mail and receive a free children's Bible. (Prize provided by Logos Bookstore, with locations in Greece and Penfield.) ?

Q & A

1. What should Aaron have done if he really wanted to be a good leader? Since Aaron had made his big mistake, he did something else that was just as wrong. What was it?

2. A false god is anything you value more highly in your life than you value God. What kinds of false gods do we have today?

King Solomon's Wisdom

Waiting is hard. But it's much better to wait for God's answers than to rush ahead like Aaron and do things your own way.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

Proverbs 3:5-6

Talking to God

Dear God,
Help me to keep the faith and trust you to help me, especially during times of trouble.

Psalms 146:10
"The Lord is near to all who call on him."

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