

“If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD...”
Leviticus 1:2 Exodus 24 & 32

God wanted a relationship with His people and as a blessing to them, He gave them the law. If you are going to give a gift to someone to express your love to them, it really helps for them to tell you what they like and don't like. Sometimes we look at the law as if it was a burden but the Nation had just seen the awesome, the fearful power of God and been relieved to have some instructions in how they could worship their God in a way that He would accept. What a blessing that God did not leave them in the dark about the kind of worship that pleased Him. Wholehearted worship, yes, wholehearted but always on God's terms. Look at the first 4 of the 10 commandments

- **Thou shalt have no other gods before me**
- **Thou shalt not make any graven image**
- **Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them**
- **Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord Thy God in vain**
- **Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy**

All four of these commandments deal directly with worship. These command are summarized by Jesus as “loving the Lord.” This is the greatest commandment.

The book of Leviticus starts with this phrase, “*If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering...*” (Lev 1:2). The blessing of the Law is that it goes on to explain the offerings, the ways they should be presented, the best time to present it, and with what heart attitude.

Thank You God for inviting us to fellowship with you in worship.

We praise You because You are holy. It is a comfort to know that

You will never be less than holy. You will never change. God, help us to learn more about what brings pleasure to You and worship You with abandon.

Amen

In Exodus 24 we see a wonderful worship service. Moses, as the singularly intimate mouthpiece of God, acted as the prophet to declare God's Words to the people (Ex 24:2-3). The people's response was clear, “*all the people answered with one voice, and said, all the words which the Lord hath said will we do*” An altar is built (Ex 24:4), animals sacrificed (Ex 24:5), the book of the covenant is read (Ex 24:7), people responded in affirmation (Ex 24:7), Moses sprinkled the people with the blood of the sacrifice (Ex 24:8) and the leaders experienced a unique display of God's glory (Ex 24:9-11,15-18). What a glorious worship service!

But it wasn't long before Israel began to follow Satan's lead into a perversion of the true worship of God. Even before Israel had the completed tablets containing the Ten Commandments they had already begun to brake them by being involved in false worship. We find that story in Exodus 32.

Aaron yielded to the worship wishes of the people and constructed a golden calf. Still he announced “tomorrow is a feast to the Lord” (Ex 32:5). In fact, there were several similarities between these two worship events.

There were offerings

“And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning and builded an altar...And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord.” Ex 24:5

“And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings.
Ex 32:6

Even material sacrifices

“And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, silver...”
Ex 25:2-3

“And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron” Ex 32:3

There was certainly wholehearted participation

“... also they saw God, and did eat and drink” (Ex 24:11)
“And the Lord spake...bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with all his heart...” Ex 25:1-2

“...he [Moses] saw the calf, and the people were naked...” (Ex 32:19,25)
“Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted...” Ex 32:17

Yes, there were many wonderful aspects of worship present in both narratives but there were also some noticeable differences. In Exodus 24:3 we read “And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments.” But when Aaron was making his worship decisions he consulted the people instead of the Word of the Lord. The Word was minimized.

In Exodus 24:7 we read “All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.” But in Exodus 32 the people are out of control and living controlled by their sensual desires.

And what about the music that accompanied this false worship? Put yourself into the story. Moses and Joshua are coming down from the mountain and can barely hear what is going down below. Joshua is concerned.

And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. ¹⁸ And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. (Ex 24:17-18)

Notice what the music sounded like. When Moses departed and came to Joshua on the mountain Joshua heard the shouting of the people (lit., the voice of the people in its noise,

tumult), and took it to be the noise of war; but Moses said (v. 18), “*It is not the sound of the answering of power, nor the sound of the answering of weakness,*” (Keil & Delitzsch: *Commentary on the Old Testament* S. 1:468)

The scene Moses and Joshua came upon when they arrived looked more like the perverse worship of the Egyptians than the “feast to the Lord” that Aaron had promised it would be. They were totally out of control and indulging in the very forms of debauchery God had delivered them from.

*The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble!
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!
The LORD is great in Zion;
he is exalted over all the peoples.
Let them praise your great and awesome name!
Holy is he!
The King in his might loves justice.
You have established equity;
you have executed justice
and righteousness in Jacob.
Exalt the LORD our God;
worship at his footstool!
Holy is he!
(Psalm 99:1-5, ESV)*

The anger of the Lord was kindled and He commanded Moses to “Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor” (Ex 32:27). Three thousand were slain, the tables of stone were broken, and so was the heart of God.

Take some time right now to pray for the purity of your own worship, the worship of your family, the worship of your church and its leaders, and for the whole of Christianity. God help us to worship in the way they did in Exodus 24 and not in Exodus 32.