



A YEAR
with
GOD
Daily Devotional

DAY 40



A PUBLICATION OF GOD'S THRESHING PLACE
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DAY FORTY

Exodus 30 - 32

The God They Made Themselves

Forty days. Moses has been on the mountain for forty days receiving the most detailed, sacred architectural instructions in human history. Below him, a nation is camped. The mountain is still smoking. The covenant is less than six weeks old. The blood of the covenant still fresh in their memory. And the people go to Aaron and say:

“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.”*

- Exodus 32:1

This fellow Moses. Six weeks ago they were singing songs of deliverance. Now they are dismissing the man who parted the sea as this fellow -and demanding a replacement god because the original feels too far away. The delay has become unbearable. The silence of the mountain has been filled with anxiety. And anxiety, when left long enough, builds itself an idol.

Idolatry is almost never about theology. It is almost always about anxiety. We do not make golden calves because we believe in calves. We make them because we

cannot bear the silence of waiting for the God we cannot see. The idol is management of the unbearable gap.

Chapter 30 and 31, the chapters that frame the golden calf catastrophe, are still God giving Moses instructions on the mountain. The altar of incense - every morning and evening, fragrant smoke rising before the Lord, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. The basin for washing - Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet so that they do not die. The anointing oil. The census tax. A half shekel from every Israelite, rich and poor alike, to remind them that they are all equally ransomed.

And then two men: Bezalel and Oholiab. God calls them by name. He says: I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills. The same Spirit of God that hovered over the waters in Genesis 1 is now resting on craftsmen -filling them with the capacity to make beautiful, precise, holy things. The Spirit of God is not only for prophets and warriors. He fills artists. He fills builders. He fills people who work with their hands.

The Spirit of God is as present in the skilled craftsman as in the preacher. Bezalel's name is called alongside Moses'. What you make with your hands, when you make it for God, is as sacred as any sermon. The Spirit fills the gifted, whatever the gift.

Meanwhile, at the bottom of the mountain.

Aaron collects the gold earrings. He fashions them with a tool. He makes a golden calf. And he says: these are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt. He builds an altar in front of it. He announces a festival to the Lord -he even uses the covenant name - and the people sacrifice and sit down to eat and drink and get up to indulge in revelry.

-Aaron calls the festival to the Lord. He uses the right name over the wrong thing. This is the most dangerous kind of idolatry - not the obvious paganism but the worship of a manageable god under the name of the real one.

God tells Moses to go down. His anger burns against the people. And Moses does something extraordinary: he argues with God. He intercedes. He says: why should your anger burn against your people whom you brought out of Egypt? Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel -you swore by your own self. And the Lord relented from the disaster that He had spoken of bringing on His people.

Moses stood in the gap. He placed himself between the wrath of God and the people who deserved it -and he appealed not to their merit but to God's own name, His own covenant, His own promise. That is intercession. And it worked. Intercessors change things not because of who they are but because of whose name they invoke.

Moses comes down the mountain. He hears the sound of singing. He sees the calf. He sees the dancing. And his anger burns and he throws the tablets -the work of God, the writing of God -and breaks them at the foot of the mountain. He takes the calf, burns it, grinds it

to powder, scatters it on water, makes the Israelites drink it. You wanted a god you could make. You will taste what it costs.

The tribe of Levi rallies to Moses. The ringleaders of the rebellion are executed. Three thousand people die that day. And Moses goes back up the mountain and says: please forgive their sin -but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written. Let me bear this consequence instead of them.

Moses offered his own name -his place in God's book -as a substitute for the people who had just broken the covenant. God says: no. Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out. But the impulse Moses acted on -the willingness to take the consequence of others' sin upon himself -is the impulse that would one day walk out of Nazareth and head toward Jerusalem. Moses pointed toward Someone who would actually do it.

Speak this over yourself today:

I will not fill the silence of waiting with a god I can manage.

The delay is not abandonment.

*I will stand in the gap for those around me
and invoke the name that changes things.*

TOMORROW -Day 41 Exodus 33-35

*Moses is about to ask God for something no one has ever asked:
show me your glory. And God is going to do something
unprecedented in response. Come back tomorrow.*

Day 40 of 365



MUSIC AND THE BIBLE

EVERYDAY: 3AM & 9AM

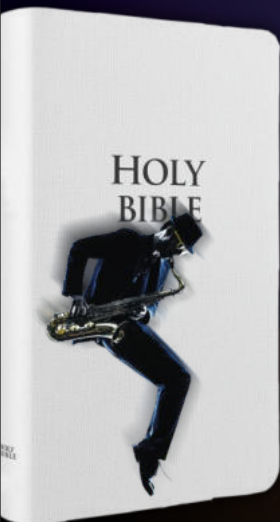
Music is more than melody it's a language of worship.

Join us on Music and the Bible as we explore
the biblical significance of music and its
role in drawing hearts closer to God.

Tune in and be inspired

"Let everything that has breath praise the Lord."

— Psalm 150:6



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