

ISSUE

19.35

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

August 27,
2017

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter

Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon

Ryan Ferguson

Arend Gressley

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Brady McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Rusty Scott

Justin Smiley

Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



Golden Calves

By Kyle Pope

After the Israelites came out of Egypt the Bible tells us about a disappointing choice the people made on one occasion when Moses was on Mount Sinai. Exodus 32:1 tells us, **“Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, ‘Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him’”** (NKJV). Rather than obeying the words God had given only a short time before this forbidding such idolatry, Aaron, **“received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they**



said, **“This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!”** (Exod. 32:4).

When Moses returned to find the people engaged in riotous worship of the calf, he threw down the stone tablets God Himself had inscribed (Exod. 3:16, 19), ground the calf into powder that was put in the people’s water and forced them to drink it (Exod. 3:20). Then the camp was purged of those who still refused to follow God by a bloody battle in which 3000 men died in one

day (Exod. 3:27,28). If Moses had not pled to God for mercy the entire nation would have been destroyed and God would have raised up another people through Moses (Exod. 3:10-14).

About 500 years later after the Israelites became a nation with Solomon as their 3rd king and Jerusalem as their capital, a servant of Solomon’s named Jeroboam rebelled against him (1 King 11:26). Although this came upon Solomon because of his sin in turning to the idols of the pagan wives he had married, God wanted Jeroboam to serve him faithfully (1 Kings 11:26-38). When Solomon died, and his son Rehoboam oppressed the people, the Israelites chose to set Jeroboam over them as king. Unfortunately, in order to keep the people from turning back to Rehoboam whenever they returned to Jerusalem to sacrifice, Jeroboam, **“took counsel, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, ‘It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!’”** (1 Kings 12:28). Jeroboam set up these two calves in Dan and Bethel (1 Kings 12:29)—near the upper and lower

boundaries of the territory of Israel. To support his idolatrous worship he built shrines on the high places and established his own priesthood (1 Kings 12:31). He set up altars, made sacrifices and established feast days, **“which he devised in his own heart”** (1 Kings 12:32-33).

In these two situations, separated from each other by centuries, we see some powerful lessons that speak to us today.





Ruins of Ancient Dan

1. The Worship of God. In both instances when the people turned to idolatry it was cloaked in the appearance of worship to God. Neither Aaron nor Jeroboam tried to turn the people to another God, both claimed that the calves were the God who brought them out of the land of Egypt. Even so, in leading the people to worship God in a way that He had not authorized (but actually forbidden) they were turning away from Him. God speaks those who will worship Him, **“in spirit and truth”** (John 4:23-24).

2. The Imagination of the Heart. In both instances the motivation behind the action of the people was not God’s word but the desires and imagination of their own hearts. While it is true that God expects us to use the heart, mind, and all abilities He has given to us in His service, that does not mean that we are free to shape religion in accordance with our own desires. It is God’s word that reveals to us, **“complete, thoroughly**

equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

3. They Committed a Great Sin. After Moses had purged the camp, he returned to God and said, **“Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold!”** (Exod. 32:31). In summarizing the life of Jeroboam, when the Bible refers to his establishment of the false worship associated with the gold calves it declares, **“this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy [it] from the face of the earth”** (1 Kings 13:34). In spite of the fact that it was a religious observance, and in spite of the fact that the people had used their creativity and resourcefulness it was a sin that



separated the people from God.

Modern Day Application.

In our world today there are many things that are done that are cloaked in the worship of God that were never established, taught, or commanded by God. Men have devised in their own hearts thousands of human de-

nominations who call themselves by thousands of different names. They have taught unscriptural ideas such salvation by “faith only,” the “sinner’s prayer;” the worship of Mary, “once saved always saved,” purgatory, councils, conventions, popes, and indulgences. As acts of worship from their own imagination men have fashioned their own gold calves through the use of incense, choirs, mechanical instruments of music, dance, plays, priests, priestly garments, altars, ritual prayers, hand-clapping, and women preachers, things never taught in the New Testament—and in some cases actually forbidden! *What should this teach us?* If God was displeased with this kind of behavior in the past why should we imagine that it will be any different today?



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**We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.**

● Let us know if you have any questions.