

# Up From Slavery

A man / A people / A plan

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FACING FREEDOM:

HOLY COW?

EXODUS 32:1-10

## Context

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- Israel has chosen to keep God at a comfortable distance.
- Moses has received the law, Chapters 25-31
- Moses has been on Mt. Sinai for 40 days

## Exodus 32

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### Crisis

<sup>1</sup> 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.”

# Truths Observed

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1. We all have something that we look to so that our lives have significance.

## Leadership Failure

<sup>2</sup> Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” <sup>3</sup> So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup> 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, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

<sup>5</sup> When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.” <sup>6</sup> 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.

# Truths Observed

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1. We all have something that we look to so that our lives have significance.
2. Leadership does not consist of giving people what they want. Instead, it means resisting their tendency to pursue those things which will bring them harm.

## God's Response

<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. <sup>8</sup> 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, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.'

<sup>9</sup> "I have seen these people," the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people. <sup>10</sup> 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."

# Truths Observed

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1. We all have something that we look to so that our lives have significance.
2. Leadership does not consist of giving people what they want. Instead, it means resisting their tendency to pursue those things which will bring them harm.
3. Actions have consequences.

## The Power of Intercession

<sup>11</sup> But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. “O LORD,” he said, “why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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.’ ” <sup>14</sup> Then the LORD relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

# Truths Observed

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1. We all have something that we look to so that our lives have significance.
2. Leadership does not consist of giving people what they want. Instead, it means resisting their tendency to pursue those things which will bring them harm.
3. Actions have consequences.
4. Prayer can make a difference.

## To Go . . .

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Where do you find your significance?

Who do you lead?

How are you making a difference for Christ?