

Acts 7:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

Analysis

Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. The golden calf incident epitomizes human idolatry—replacing the invisible God with tangible, controllable objects.

Make us gods reveals humanity's impulse toward idolatry when God seems absent or distant. Plural gods suggests they wanted multiple deities they could manipulate. To go before us shows desire for visible leadership—faith requires trusting an unseen God, which feels risky to fallen humanity.

The dismissal of Moses—we wot not what is become of him—shows how quickly devotion fades. Moses had been gone forty days (Exodus 24:18), and their impatience exploded into idolatry. This reveals human fickleness and the necessity of persevering faith.

Aaron's compliance (he made the calf) shows how spiritual leaders can fail under pressure. Reformed theology emphasizes human depravity affecting even covenant leaders. The tragedy: they attributed the Exodus to Moses rather than God, then replaced Moses with an idol. This double error—crediting deliverance to human instruments, then worshiping created things—marks all idolatry.

Historical Context

Exodus 32 records the golden calf incident occurring while Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai. The irony is profound—God was giving the second commandment ('no graven images') while below the people violated it.

Egypt's bull-worship (Apis bull) likely influenced their choice of a calf idol. Though freed physically from Egypt, Egyptian religious concepts still controlled their thinking. Stephen uses this to indict his audience: you've been freed from the old covenant's external forms, yet you resist the Spirit's internal work. The speech dates to 34-35 CE, addressing Jews who emphasized temple and ritual while rejecting Messiah.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What modern 'golden calves' do Christians create when God seems distant or silent?
2. How does impatience in spiritual life lead to idolatry and substituting human leadership for divine guidance?
3. Why is trusting an invisible God more difficult than following visible, tangible religion?
4. In what ways do we attribute God's work to human instruments rather than recognizing divine agency?
5. How should spiritual leaders respond when facing pressure to compromise truth for popular approval?

Interlinear Text

εἰπόντες τῷ Ααρών Ποίησον ἡμῖν θεοὺς ὅς
Saying G3588 unto Aaron Make us gods to
G2036 G2 G4160 G2254 G2316 G3739

προπορεύσονται ἡμῶν· ὁ γὰρ Μωσῆς οὗτος ὅς
go before us for Moses as for this to
G4313 G2257 G1063 G3475 G3778 G3739

ἐξήγαγεν ἡμᾶς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου οὐκ οἴδαμεν τί⁷
brought us out of the land of Egypt not we wot what
G1806 G2248 G1537 G1093 G125 G3756 G1492 G5101

γέγονεν αὐτῷ
is become of him
G1096 G846

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 32:1 (References God): And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

Exodus 32:23 (References God): For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.