

Exodus 32:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?

Analysis

Moses confronts Aaron with מה-עשָׂה לְךָ פְּנֵי הָעָם הַזֶּה (meh-asah lecha ha'am hazeh, What did this people do to you?) suggesting the people pressured Aaron—but leaders are accountable regardless of pressure. The charge כי-הָבָאת עֲלֵיכָו חַטָּאת גְּדוֹלָה (ki-heveta alav chata'ah gedolah, that you have brought upon it a great sin) uses the adjective גְּדוֹלָה (gedolah, great) to emphasize the sin's enormity. Moses holds Aaron directly responsible despite popular demand, teaching that spiritual leaders cannot excuse compromise by blaming followers.

Historical Context

Aaron's position as high priest-designate made his failure more egregious. His sons Nadab and Abihu would later offer strange fire (Lev 10), suggesting Aaron's family struggled with taking God's holiness seriously.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How do you respond when confronted about facilitating others' sin?

2. What responsibility do leaders bear for followers' spiritual compromise?

Interlinear Text

בָּעֵד מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר
said And Moses H413 unto Aaron H175 What did H6213
H559 H4872 H4100 H0 this people H5971

גָּדוֹלָה: מְטַפֵּח הַעֲלֵי יְהִי אֶת
H2088 H3588 unto thee that thou hast brought H935
H5921 a sin H2401 so great H1419

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 20:9 (Sin): Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.

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