

Exodus 32:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Analysis

The triple emphasis (שׁרָו, saru, turned aside; מִנְהָרָה, maher, quickly; מִן-הַדְּרֵק, from the way) stresses both the speed and completeness of their apostasy. God calls it 'the way צִוִּיתִם (asher tzivvitim, which I commanded them),' emphasizing they knew better—this was willful rebellion. Their worship (וַיַּעֲשִׂתּוּ, vayyishtachavu, bowed down) and sacrifice (וַיַּעֲשֵׂה, vayyizbechu, sacrificed) used proper worship vocabulary for idolatry. The repeated proclamation אלה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם (eleh elohekha, these are your gods) directly violated the first commandment while Moses held the tablets above.

Historical Context

The irony is acute: God was inscribing 'You shall have no other gods before me' while the people proclaimed the calf their deliverer. This demonstrates humanity's total inability to keep God's law apart from His enabling grace.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does knowing God's commands make disobedience more culpable?
2. What does this teach about the inadequacy of law alone to produce righteousness?

Interlinear Text

רֹוֹתִים	מִן	מִן	מִן	אֲשֶׁר	צָוָת
They have turned	aside quickly	H4480	out of the way	H834	which I commanded
H5493	H4118		H1870		H6680
עֲשֵׂה וְ	לְבָם	עֲגָל	מִסְכָּה	וְשִׁתְּפָהוּ	לָ
them they have made	H0	calf	them a molten	and have worshipped	H0
H6213	H5695	H4541		H7812	
תִּבְחֹר	לְ	לְ	לְהָ	אֵלֶיךָ	
it and have sacrificed	H0	thereunto and said	H428	These be thy gods	
H2076		H559		H430	
אֲשֶׁר יְשַׁבָּא לְ	בָּעֵל וּבָ	מֵאֶצְבָּע	מִצְרַיִם		
O Israel	H834	which have brought thee up	out of the land	of Egypt	
H3478		H5927	H776	H4714	

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 20:23 (References God): Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.

1 Kings 12:28 (Creation): Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 9:16 (Creation): And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against the LORD your God, and had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the LORD had commanded you.

Exodus 22:20 (Sacrifice): He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed.

Judges 2:17 (References God): And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so.

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