

# Psalm 106:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.

## Analysis

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This verse recounts the golden calf incident (Exodus 32). 'They made a calf in Horeb' refers to the golden calf Aaron fashioned while Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the Law. 'Horeb' is another name for Sinai. 'Worshipped the molten image' shows they bowed to a metal statue—violating the second commandment before Moses even descended with the tablets. The irony is devastating: while God was establishing covenant law prohibiting idolatry, the people were committing idolatry at the mountain's base. This demonstrates human depravity—even immediately after redemption from Egypt and miraculous provision, they reverted to pagan worship. It also shows that even God's redeemed people are capable of shocking apostasy apart from His sustaining grace.

## Historical Context

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Exodus 32 records that after 40 days, the people grew impatient with Moses's absence and demanded Aaron make them 'gods to go before us.' Aaron collected gold earrings, fashioned a calf, and proclaimed 'These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt' (Exodus 32:4). The people offered sacrifices and 'rose up to play'—likely including sexual immorality. Moses interceded to prevent God's total destruction of the nation. Three thousand died in judgment (Exodus 32:28).

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How could Israel commit idolatry so soon after witnessing God's power at the Red Sea?
2. What does the golden calf incident teach about human depravity and spiritual instability?
3. In what ways do believers today create 'golden calves'—substitute gods to worship?

## Interlinear Text

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למִסְכָּה: וְשִׁתְּפָנָו בָּחָר בְּעֵדָל יְעַשֵּׂו  
They made a calf in Horeb and worshipped the molten image  
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