



We wot not...

*1 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. (Ex 32:1)*

How frail is the memory of men who have been saved and richly blessed by the Lord. God, throughout His Word, cautions us to REMEMBER, but we cannot seem to endure a fortnight before our lapses in memory and devotion overwhelm us. *Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. This day came ye out in the month Abib. And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the LORD. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the LORD'S law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt. (Ex 13:3-9)*

Those of us who vainly devise New Year's resolutions will know how long their memories lasted in keeping those. These Children of Israel have seen more miracles than any others in biblical history – they have seen the seas parted and Pharaoh's army drowned; they have seen the Pillar of Fire by night and Cloud by Day that both led and followed them; they have witnessed the miraculous supply of water from the cleft Rock; they have seen the Manna come down from Heaven for their food; and they have seen the mighty thundering and smoky cloud from the heights of Sinai; - yet, they have forgotten those wonders and gone a'whoring after other gods of wood, stone, and precious metal.

They do not know what has happened to Moses? Really? He is still in the smoke covered mountain as before. It seems that these profane men could not wait until their Godly leader was away until they resorted to idolatry. All of their needs have been provided by the Lord. They have not dug wells or sown for the harvest, yet their thirsts

are quenched with the living waters from the Rock of Mount Horeb, and their stomachs are filled with the Manna God has sent. This reminds me of modern America in which men eat without labor, and drink without cost. Such conditions lead to boredom. The people, rather than being faithful in remembering the God of blessings, have become bored and listless. They want little hand-crafted gods instead of the God of Heaven and Earth. How shameful! Have we not become so today? Who will take time to attend worship, to study the Holy Bible and pray when they could, instead, be engaged in some computer or internet game on their iPod? Even young people who do attend church often carry their little gods with them and hear little of Scripture reading.

One man can stand on truth and rout a thousand, but error requires a mob to get its way. Note that the people *"gathered themselves together"* before Aaron. Evil desires company. God had covenanted to live among them, yet they cast God out from among them. *This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, 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.* (Acts 7:38-40) Like most unrepentant sinners, they desired the bondage of Egypt more than the Liberty of the Lord.

*And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.* (Ex 32:1-4) Even among the depraved of Egypt, it was not customary for men or boys to wear earrings (representing bondage), but the children of Israel had become soft and inclined to fashions that were ungodly. Aaron, rather than standing on Godly courage, was intimidated (perhaps) by the gathering and agreed to perform their desires. He would have made a fantastic US Senator of today with his compromising personality. There is no greater blasphemy than that which attributes the works of God to other so-called gods. *These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*

*And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.* (Ex 32:5-6) It is tragic to learn that the man who was destined to become the priest of the Tabernacle would sink to such depths. They did have a feast day, but not to the Lord – it was to their false gods which their hands had fashioned. They *"rose up to play,"* i.e., to engage in shameful and riotous acts of depravity. But the Lord knows when a people have turned their hearts against Him. He may already be considering a judgment against nations who do. One point that is a warning to us today is that we do not partake of the Lord's Supper unworthily.

*And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: 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. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:* (Ex 32:7-9) The pure conscience of God is incensed at the idolatry of His people. It is much like an honorable young gentleman who gets engaged to the love of his life one day, and the next discovers that his betrothed has committed adultery with men of the street. Notice, too, that God says that these people had *"turned aside quickly."* REMEMBER, we must persevere to the end.

Though the first step to godliness begins a journey of one thousand miles, the last must also be taken to complete the journey.

God speaks to Moses: *Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.* (Ex 32:10) God has no intention of changing His mind about the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; His words are intended to instill an even greater intercessory spirit in the heart of Moses, His servant. Additionally, His comments are probably intended to evoke a fear in the people of Israel concerning their apostasy. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.* Notice the effect of God's Words on Moses: *And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.* (Ex 32:11-12) This intercession of Moses on behalf of his erring people is a good example of the intercessory work of the Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of us today.

Now see that Moses has the temerity to ask God to REMEMBER! *Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.* (Ex 32:13) In our own prayers, I believe the Lord likes to be reminded of His promises to us – not because He may forget, but because it reveals our own sound memory of them. Another point that is about to be revealed is this: the Lord hears and answers prayers that it is already His will to grant – in fact, the Lord loves such prayers. See the next verse: *And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.* (Ex 32:14) Had Moses prayed for a result that was out of the character of God to grant, the result would have been different. There are two principle reasons that our prayers go unanswered: *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:* (Psalms 66:18) When we pray to God, we must clear our hearts of all resentment and hate, and ask in faith. *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.* (James 4:3) Asking God for blessings out of a selfish or covetous heart will never be granted.

