

Lessons From the Life of Aaron

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Well, it's no secret that all of us are striving to be better Christians. We are striving to have more faith. We're striving to have more of God's spirit. We're striving to be more obedient. We're striving to be more like Jesus Christ.

And I've often thought and I've talked to other Brethren who have thought the same thing, wouldn't it be great if we could see the miracles that God performed back in the Old Testament and the New Testament if we could see those miracles today? Wouldn't that be wonderful if we could go back in time and be on the ark when the heavens opened up or be there when the Red Sea parted? Or be there when fire was called down from heaven? Or we were there when two people who lied to an apostle and they dropped dead if we were there to see that?

It's easy to think that if we had seen all those things, it would be easier then to have more faith or to be more obedient or to be closer to God if we had seen those miracles. And on the surface, I think we can all probably say, "Yeah, if I witnessed that, I would be a stronger Christian than I am today?"

So, let's ask the questions.

- If God was performing mighty miracles on a frequent basis today before our very eyes and even used some of His people to perform those miracles today, would it make our calling easier?
- Would we have more faith?
- Would we have more of God's spirit?
- Would it be easier not to compromise with the world if we saw those miracles today or we were there back then?

So to answer that question, "Would it be easier to be a Christian?" we're going to look into the life of a very famous man. And we're going to learn the lessons and answer the question from the life of Aaron. What we're going to do is we're going to study his life and study his example, this brother of Moses. And we're going to show, before we're done today, we're going to show that:

- no matter how many conversations you have directly with God,
- no matter how many miracles you witness,
- no matter if you actually perform some of those miracles,

- no matter if you were in vision and saw God and His throne and ate with God,

If we're not being led by God's holy spirit, **we will compromise.**

We will go the wrong direction. And we, if we're not being led by God's holy spirit, it doesn't make any difference how many miracles we see. If we're not being led by His holy spirit, we would head in the way of the world and head in the way of Satan.

Now, to set the stage, let's talk a little bit about Aaron's background. Aaron was the great-grandson of Levi. And Levi was the third son of Jacob and Leah. Aaron was the older brother of Moses. We know that because when he spoke, when he and Moses spoke to Pharaoh for the first time we're told in Exodus 7 that Moses was eighty and Aaron was eighty-three.

Now the Church of God traditionally has said that the Exodus likely occurred somewhere around 1446-1447 B.C. Some people say it was two or three, four years earlier, but that's the general accepted date. So, if that's the case and Moses was born eighty years earlier, He was born somewhere around 1526 or 1527. And Aaron, being three years older was likely born in about 1530 B.C. And that is roughly eighty years after the death of Joseph, to give you a time frame.

Now in Exodus 1, we won't turn there, but you remember that Pharaoh commanded all of Israel's newborn sons to be killed by throwing them into the River Nile and drowning them. Now, Aaron, being three years older, escaped that. So, he wasn't involved in that.

And then in Exodus 2, we know that Moses was put into a basket by his mother and his sister watched as the basket began to float down the river. And she was hiding in the reeds as she watched the basket go. And Pharaoh's daughter, while she was bathing, saw the basket, opened it up, found baby Moses there, and took him into her family.

Now, Moses' sister, seeing this, came up to Pharaoh's daughter and said to her, "I can find a Hebrew woman who will nurse [him] and be a nurse for the baby." Obviously, God inspired that. She ran to get her mother Jochebed (Hebrew: *Yokebed*). And Jochebed began to nurse the baby and help in that regard.

Now, we don't know how close Moses and Aaron were growing up because, obviously, Moses grew up in Pharaoh's household. Aaron grew up in his own household. And we don't know when Jochebed told Aaron about [his] brother. Maybe she did when he was a teenager, maybe later. We just don't know. It appears, though, that they knew they were brothers after Moses fled to Midian. And, as I said, at some point in Aaron's life, she told him of that account.

Now, let's understand that God gave Aaron the role of being "Moses' Prophet." Let's go to Exodus chapter 6 and we're going to read verses 28 through 30, and then the first two verses of chapter 7. We'll obviously spend quite a bit of time in Exodus today if you have a marker or a ribbon you want to put in there. Exodus chapter 6 verse 28:

Exodus 6:28-29 *And it came to pass on the day when the Lord spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt,*
29) *That the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, I am the Eternal: speak you to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto you.*
30) *And Moses said before the Eternal, (KJV)*

Moses gave Him four excuses. (I gave a sermon on that, years ago.) And he said before the Eternal, "Behold," he says. The King James says, "I am of uncircumcised lips" (Exodus 3:30a KJV). Basically what he's saying is, "I don't speak well. I never graduated from Spokesman's Club. I never have had experience in that." And God took that.

And Moses said, "How on earth can I speak to Pharaoh? How will he listen to me if I don't speak well?" (Exodus 3:30b KJV).

Chapter 7, verse 1:

Exodus 7:1-2 *And the Eternal said unto Moses, See, I have made you a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.*
2) *You shall speak all that I command you: and Aaron your brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. (KJV)*

Now the Hebrew word for "prophet" is *nabiy'* (*naw-bee'*). And it can mean an inspired man.

So, the indication is that Aaron was more than just a mouthpiece or more than just a spokesman. He also was inspired to do what he did. Just like God

inspired the workers on the Temple or the workers on the Tabernacle, inspired them to be extraordinary craftsmen to do the building of the Temple and we'll see in just a minute the building of Aaron's garments. So, Aaron was given the role of prophet, Moses' prophet or Moses' spokesman.

Aaron was well loved by Israel. Let's understand that by turning to Numbers chapter 20 and we're going to read verses 23 and 24 and then jump to 28 and 29. This is the time of Aaron's death. He is approaching the time when his life is over, his job is over. And in verse 23 of Numbers 20:

Numbers 20:23-24 *And the Eternal spoke unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying,
24) Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel [same with Moses], because you rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.
(KJV)*

And you remember Moses said, when he struck the rock, he said, "Must **we** bring water out of this rock?" implying that it was due to he and Aaron and not to God. And God was not happy with that. But he did say, "Must **we**?" meaning he and Aaron.

Verse 28:

Numbers 20:28-29 *And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain.
29) And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel. (KJV)*

Now the Bible says that only three others were mourned to that extent. Jacob spent forty days; his body was embalmed for forty days in the tradition of the Egyptians and the family of Israel mourned for seventy days. We find that in Genesis 50. Moses, when he died, Israel wept for thirty days on the Plains of Moab. You find that in Deuteronomy chapter 34. And then Samuel, when he died, all Israel gathered together and mourned for him. We find that in 1 Samuel 25.

So, Aaron is in very elite company here when Israel mourned for him for thirty days. And it shows their respect. And he is now in very select company.

Now, with all of this background, what we want to do next is establish that Aaron had direct contact with God. We'll cover four different examples that show the different kinds of contact Aaron had with God. First:

1. **God talked to Aaron directly.**

God talked to him just as directly as can be. Exodus chapter 4, we're going to read verses 27 through 31. Aaron heard God's voice. We don't know if it was through the ears of hearing or whether the words came into his brain. We just don't know. Verse 27 of Exodus 4:

Exodus 4:27 *And the Eternal said to Aaron, (KJV)*

God is talking directly to Aaron. He says:

Exodus 4:27b-28 *Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. (KJV)*
28) And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Eternal who had sent him, and all the signs... (KJV)

Now, that Hebrew word for "signs" can mean miracles. And it's obvious in the context that's what it means.

Exodus 4:28b-29 *... and showed him all the signs which he had commanded him.*
29) And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: (KJV)

Now, notice this!

Exodus 4:30 *And Aaron spoke... (KJV)*

Aaron is doing the speaking.

Exodus 4:30-31 *And Aaron spoke all the words which the Eternal had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs [performed the miracles in the sight of the people.*
31) And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped. (KJV)

So, we see here very clearly—and there are many other Scriptures we could use—God talked directly to Aaron.

The Second Area of direct contact Aaron had with God is that:

2. God performed miracles through him.

He was the vehicle by which the miracles were performed. Let's go to chapter 7 of Exodus and we'll read verses 8 through 12, a very familiar account. Now, notice what it says.

Exodus 7:8 *And the LORD spoke unto Moses and unto Aaron, (KJV)*

Both, apparently simultaneously!

Exodus 7:9-12 *When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Show a miracle for you: then you shall say unto Aaron, Take your rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.*

10) And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORDI had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

11) Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

12) For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. (KJV)

Obviously to the amazement and consternation of Pharaoh.

Now, let me read just from the book Egyptian Magic on page 71. It says:

The power to control and direct the movements of such venomous reptiles was one of the things of which the Egyptians were most proud and in which he was most skillful already in the time when the pyramids were being built.

Now it could have been that what they did, what the Pharaoh's magicians did was akin to snake-charming. Or it could have been something supernatural originating from Satan the chief serpent. We just don't know. Someday we'll find out. We do know that the chief Egyptian magicians were Jannes and Jambres. We find that in 2 Timothy 3:8.

So, God used Aaron to perform this miracle. Also, four of the ten plagues upon Egypt were personally performed by Aaron.

- The first one, Water Turning into Blood. God said to Aaron, "Stretch out your rod." And he did and the water turned to blood.
- The second one, The Plague of the Frogs: He stretched out his rod.
- And the third, The Plague of the Lice: He did the same thing.

Aaron performed the miracle. I mean, obviously, God was doing it, but he was the vehicle by which the miracle was performed. Also, the Sixth Plague, the Plague of Boils, God told them to take a handful of ashes. And Aaron took the ashes and threw them up in the air. And we know where the dust settled on the Egyptians boils would erupt.

So, the summary of all of this we find in Exodus chapter 11 and verse 10. We see that Aaron was used in an integral way of performing miracles. Exodus 11 verse 10:

Exodus 11:10 *And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go out of his land. (KJV)*

Now, of course, Aaron also saw the parting of the Red Sea. The question is: "Was he the second one in?" Obviously, Moses went in and led Israel through. Was he right behind Moses or walked right beside Moses? Could be, probably so. Someday we will find out.

So, the second area of direct contact God had with Aaron or Aaron had with God was performing miracles through him.

The third area of contact was that:

3. In vision Aaron personally saw God's throne.

Let's go to Exodus chapter 24 and read verses 9 through 11. Now these verses talk about Moses going up to the mountain. And this is the fifth time that Moses is going up into the mountain. Notice:

Exodus 24:9 *Then went up Moses [for the fifth time, but he's accompanied by], and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: (KJV)*

And when they got part way up the mountain, we're told:

Exodus 24:10 *And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in ... clearness. (KJV)*

They saw this in vision. They didn't, obviously, go up to heaven. They saw it in a vision. All of them.

Now the Hebrew word for "paved work" literally means "white transparency," almost like crystal or a diamond.

We know in Ezekiel 1 and verse 26, God's throne has the appearance of sapphire. Now the Hebrew word for "sapphire" means really "a gem." It's a supposition that it is sapphire. We normally think of sapphire as blue, but if you talk to a gemologist or somebody who is versed in the chemistry of stones, the color of sapphire is due to impurities in the sapphire. And you can have purples; you can have blues; you can have dark blues and lighter blues; but it's all due to the number of impurities in the sapphire.

Now, without impurities, sapphire is absolutely clear. And this is just my speculation, but I don't know that God would have impurities in His throne. And my guess is it was absolutely clear. We know from Revelation 4:16 about the Sea of Glass in front of the throne and it says it's like crystal. Well, crystal is white. And if God's throne and below God's throne is clear transparency, you could see the glory of God being reflected off the Sea of Crystal or Diamond and it would just sparkle like we often see if you're driving down a road parallel to a river or an ocean, you can see the sunlight sparkle off the water. Well, the Sea of Glass, I'm sure, reflects the Light (because God is Light) coming from God and coming from His throne.

I've often wondered if the Sea of Glass has waves in it. Wouldn't that be something? It would be like a Sea of Diamonds. And yet, they move and have waves reflecting the Light of God.

So, they saw this in verses 9 and 10 in vision. Notice verse 11.

Exodus 24:11 *And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: (KJV)*

Now, we'll see what that means in just a second.

Exodus 24:11b ... also they saw God, and did eat and drink. (KJV)

The implication is: They saw God in vision and they ate and drank with Him in vision. Now, it must have been a vision because Exodus 33, remember when God hid Moses in the cleft of the rock? And He told Moses, "You can't see God and live." So, this had to be a vision.

But could it have been a type of—this is my speculation—could it have been a type of Marriage Supper of physical Israel that will be repeated later for spiritual Israel. We don't know, but Aaron saw the throne of God in vision. He saw God. They ate and drank in the presence of God in a vision.

So, that's the third area of contact that Aaron has had with God.

The last one that we'll cover is:

4. God appointed Aaron to be His personal minister.

Now, how would you like that honor to be bestowed on any of us? To be God's personal minister? Let's go to Exodus chapter 28 and we'll read the first four verses. This is quite an honor. Exodus 28 beginning in verse 1 and He says:

Exodus 28:1 *And take unto you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel,* (KJV)

Notice why at the end of verse 1 of Exodus 28.

Exodus 28:1b-3 ... *that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.*

2) And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother for glory and for beauty.

3) And you shall speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, (KJV)

God's spirit began to inspire these men. Notice:

Exodus 28:3b-4 ...*that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him,* (KJV)

And so, God gave them a special gift of skill and wisdom to craft the garments that Aaron would wear as a minister to God.

Exodus 28:3 continued. ... that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

4) And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. (KJV)

A personal minister to God!

It's interesting that the Talmud says that the high priest's garments were of such a quality that at the time of Esther when King Ahasuerus of Persia wanted to impress others—these garments were taken out of the Temple and the king had them—and when he had company that he wanted to impress, the Talmud says he took off his robes and he put on the high priest's garments because they were of a quality that was unmatched anywhere. Very interesting.

Now, let's recap these four areas that Aaron had direct contact with God.

1. God spoke personally to him.
2. He was used by God to perform four of the Ten Miracles. Obviously, the miracle of his rod and eating the snakes of the Egyptian magicians. He witnessed the Red Sea part.
3. In vision, he saw God's throne and ate with him.
4. And then, he had the honor of God selecting him to be the high priest of Israel so that Aaron could minister unto God personally.

Now, humanly speaking, you would think, "Wow! If all this happened to me, that would be enough!" The human mind would say, "If I saw that or experienced that, I would never doubt again. I would be filled with faith. I would be filled with God's Holy Spirit. I would never compromise with God's Law the rest of my life." It's easy for us to say that.

Now, with this in mind, let's look at the defining moment of Aaron's life. I think you know where we're going. Let's go to chapter 24 of Exodus and we'll read verses 13 through 15. We're setting the stage of what was to come in just a bit. Exodus 24 verses 13 through 15:

Exodus 24:13. And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mountain of God. (KJV)

Now, this is still Moses' fifth time up and this is after the vision when the nobles of Israel saw this vision, Aaron included. They did not go up the rest of the mountain. And Moses and Joshua went up to the top of the mountain from that point. Verse 14:

Exodus 24:14-15 *And he Moses said unto the elders, Wait here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man has any matters to do, let him come unto them to Aaron or to Hur.*

15) And Moses went up into the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. (KJV)

So, Aaron was placed in charge in Moses' absence.

Now, the context that we're going to go to now: Moses and Joshua had been on the mountain for almost six weeks. Joshua stopped below. Moses went on up, even further up to the top. Now let's go to Exodus 32 and see Aaron's defining moment. Exodus 32 and we'll begin in verse 1. Moses had been up on the mountain for six weeks now.

Exodus 32:1. *And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mountain, [NOTICE!] the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and they said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, this man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt [They didn't give God credit at all!], we don't know what has become of him. (KJV)*

Now Moses had been on the mountain for forty days. And as soon as his influence was gone, the people wanted to revert back to following the ways that they learned in Egypt. And the emotional high of coming out of Egypt and all of those miracles, coming through the Red Sea and all of those miracles, that emotional high was beginning to wear off. Moses has now disappeared for forty days and they want to go right back to where they came from.

Verse 2, notice this. This is just shocking!

Exodus 32:2. *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. (KJV)*

Now this is shocking because there was no push back from Aaron. He didn't say, "Well, you guys are heading in the wrong direction. You're doing the

wrong thing. This is blasphemy what you're asking me to do. I can't do this." None of that is recorded. And all he said is, "Bring me your gold," right out of the shoot.

It's likely that he viewed the people's "request"—and I'll say "request" in quotes—as a threat. And probably, he viewed his life in danger. The fact is that he feared for his own safety more than he feared God. And that is shocking after everything he had seen. And in this one incident, he fears for his life and that fear is greater than his fear for the God that he has seen and had all of this contact with.

Now let's read verse 3 and the beginning of verse 4.

Exodus 32:3. *And all the people broke off their golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. (KJV)*

And notice now. This is important, the beginning of verse 4:

Exodus 32:4. *And he [Aaron] received them at their hand, and [he, Aaron] fashioned it with a graving tool, then he made it a molten calf: (KJV)*

Now, most commentaries will tell you that this calf was an Apis bull, an Apis bull. Osiris was the Egyptian god of the afterlife. And the Apis bull was his symbol. Osiris' symbol was the Apis bull. It is also to this day a sign of the zodiac in the constellation Taurus. Taurus is a bull if you study into that. Please don't.

Now, out of the book, Myths, Legends and Idol Worship, let me quote this:

This bull portrayed in Egyptian hieroglyphs was the express symbol of Nimrod, the powerful one. In Assyria the word for "bull" signifies also a ruler or a prince. And it was for this reason that the mighty kings of Babylon who succeeded and imitated Nimrod, the first king, were represented by great human-headed bulls.

If you visit the Louvre in Paris, you will see that. If you were to go to Nineveh and look at what is left there of the statuary that is made, you will see that.

Going on:

The Jewish nation was clearly influenced by this pagan god, worshipping the image of a young golden bull soon after leaving Egypt under Moses and claiming that this was the god who delivered them out of their bondage.

They were actually going back and worshipping the god of the underworld, Nimrod reincarnated.

Now, let's, just as an aside, let's ask the question: Could it be that the widespread worship of oxen in paganism, as it is done in India to this very day, has been directly inspired by Satan? Because if Satan is a cherub, his main face is that of an ox.

We won't turn there, but in Ezekiel 1:10, it describes the four faces of a cherub—a man, a lion, an eagle, and an ox. And then in Ezekiel 10:14, we won't turn there, but it says, it describes, "First was a face of a cherub." Then the other three faces were a man and a lion and an eagle. So, obviously, the face of a cherub was an ox.

If Satan was one of the original cherubs, wouldn't it be appropriate in the sense that he would want people to worship him and therefore, worship the face of an ox, or worship the image of an ox, or an idol of an ox? It could be that Satan's face was the face of an ox and it could be one reason why the ox and the bull are worshipped in paganism to this day and have been worshipped down through history.

Now let's go to verse 4, the latter part of verse 4.

Exodus 32:4b. ... and they said, These be your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt. (KJV)

Now this is exactly what Jeroboam did!

Remember at the split after Solomon's death? Rehoboam, his son, the kingship fell to Rehoboam. And the people came and asked Rehoboam, "Could you let up a little bit? Could you cut us some slack a little bit about the taxes and the oppression and all of that?" And Rehoboam said, "If my father whipped you with whips, I'm going to whip you with scorpions." And the nation rebelled. Jeroboam became the king of the north; Rehoboam king of the south. And what Jeroboam did, do you remember? The first thing he did was he made two calves of gold, Apis bulls. And he put one in the north in Dan and one in the south in Bethel. Remember he ordained a "feast of

tabernacles" a month later than the Feast of Tabernacles God ordained? And he said to the people—I'll just quote from 1 Kings 12:28.

1 Kings 12:28. *It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: (KJV)*

Of course, he didn't want them to go to Jerusalem. He wanted to keep them in the north.

1 Kings 12:28b. *Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt. (KJV)*

The same thing that the people were saying to Aaron. And the image was exactly the same—the Apis bull.

Going on in verse 5 now.

Exodus 32:5. *And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, (KJV)*

Now get this! He says:

Exodus 32:5b. *Tomorrow is a feast to the LORDI. (KJV)*

It's a feast unto God and here this Apis bull is right there, right in front of everybody!

Now, Aaron clearly knew this was wrong because they had just received the Ten Commandments. They had received them and the Second Commandment says, "Don't make any graven images." He knew this was wrong.

My suspicion is this is a bad situation and he was trying to mix a little good in with the bad by saying, "Well, here's a feast unto God," and trying to maybe get God in there somewhere. And he was trying to probably have some good come out of this mess. That's kind of a carnal reaction.

Let's go to verse 6 and verse 7.

Exodus 32:6. *And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings [This "feast unto Yehovah"], and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. (KJV)*

The New International says, "engage in revelry."

Verse 7:

Exodus 32:7. *And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, (KJV)*

Moses is now at the top of the mountain. Joshua is down below.

Exodus 32:7b. *Go, get you down; (KJV)*

Now notice what God says!

Exodus 32:7 continued. *... for your people, (KJV)*

Now, obviously, they weren't God's people right then and He wasn't laying any claim to these people He was so upset with them. He says:

Exodus 32:7 continued. *... these are your people which you brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: (KJV)*

Now remember the terms of the Old Covenant were given back in chapter 19. They had just signed on to the Old Covenant. Remember God said, "If you do these things, you will be a special treasure unto Me" in verse 5 of chapter 19? This had happened not that long ago.

Verse 8:

Exodus 32:8. *They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and they've worshipped it, and they've sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be your gods, O Israel, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt. (KJV)*

Can you imagine God's reaction? God is saying, "I have done all of these miracles. I have brought you out of the most powerful nation in the world and now you're saying that this golden bull in front of you is the thing that did that?" God was very, very angry.

Verse 9:

Exodus 32:9-10 *And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:
10) Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of you a great nation. (KJV)*

Now the carnal reaction in, I think, any of us, "Yeah, God! Just wipe them out. And then the whole world will descend from me." That's the human reaction. But notice, because we all know, Moses went and fell flat on his face and asked God to intercede for them and not destroy them. And thereby Moses became a type of Christ interceding for his people. Then, as we know, God relented from His anger and did not destroy them.

Now, let's go to verse 17. Joshua, who was a bit further down the mountain:

Exodus 32:17. *And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, (KJV)*

Moses was coming down the mountain.

Exodus 32:17b. *There is a noise of war in the camp. (KJV)*

Now remember Joshua hadn't moved for forty days. He stayed loyal, unlike the nation of Israel, unlike Aaron.

Verse 18:

Exodus 32:18. *And he [Moses] said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, (KJV)*

The New King James says, "for victory." It's not a shout of a victory in war. Joshua thought that a battle was going on down there. He said, "It's not that.

Exodus 32:18b. *... neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: (KJV)*

Meaning: in war. Moses is saying, "Look, this isn't about war at all."

Exodus 32:18-20 continued. *... but the noise of them that sing do I hear.*

19) And it came to pass, as soon as he came down near unto the camp, that he saw the calf [this golden gleaming thing], and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mountain.

20) And he took the calf which they had made, he burned it in the fire, he ground it into powder, (KJV)

The King James says, "He strawed it." The New King James says, "He scattered it."

Exodus 32:20b. ... and then made the children of Israel drink of it.
(KJV)

He ground it up into a fine power, threw it into the water so these flakes were floating in the water. He made all of Israel drink.

Now there is a lesson there because after a day or two, guess where the molten calf was? They would take their little paddle and go out and dig a little hole and relieve themselves and look in the hole. Their stuff was there but it was flecked with gold. And God was in essence saying, "Behold, your god, O Israel. Where is it?" Well, it's in your poop. Think about that!

Verse 21:

Exodus 32:21. And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto you, that you have brought so great a sin upon them? (KJV)

Moses laid the responsibility right where it belonged. He says, "What have you done to cause them to sin?" Moses was angry and he felt betrayed. You can see Moses'... the wheels turning in his mind. "I leave you in charge for forty days and look what happens! Everything's been undone that's been done before."

Verse 22:

Exodus 32:22. And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot:
(KJV)

Now notice Aaron's reaction. Notice what he says.

Exodus 32:22b. ...you know the people, that they are set on mischief.
(KJV)

The first thing he did was blame the people. Verse 23:

Exodus 32:23. 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 don't know what is become of him.

24) [Aaron says,] *And I said unto them, Whosoever has any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: (KJV)*

And then, notice this!

Exodus 32:24. *I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. (KJV)*

It just popped out! The "calf-fairy" came over and waved the magic wand and out popped this golden calf! Taking no responsibility whatsoever, he blamed the people and then denied that he had anything to do with it! "The thing just popped out. I didn't have anything to do with it." And yet, in verse 4, as we read earlier, clearly shows that he fashioned it. He was telling a direct lie to Moses and, of course, God was watching all of this happen.

Verse 25:

Exodus 32:25. *And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (KJV)*

I'm reading out of the King James.

Exodus 32:25b. *(for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:.) (KJV)*

The New King James says:

Exodus: 32:25b. *... the people were unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, (NKJ)*

Now The Expositor's Bible Commentary has an interesting thought on this. It says:

The idea of "to cast off all restraints" means a loosening or an uncovering.

That's why the King James said "naked," a loosening or an uncovering.

Apparently, there was a type of religious prostitution connected with the people's worship of the golden calf.

Guess where they got that? They got it in Egypt and they were just repeating what they saw and what they learned in Egypt.

Verse 26:

Exodus 32:26. *Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. (KJV)*

Now we know Aaron was the head of the tribe of Levi and even though he wasn't faithful, his tribe was. And we will see that not everybody participated in this worship of the calf.

Verses 27 and 28 now.

Exodus 32:27-28 *And Moses said unto them, Thus says the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. 28) And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. (KJV)*

Verse 35:

Exodus 32:35. *And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made. (KJV)*

So, we see here that if they killed three thousand that is not a very high percentage of the total population of Israel, but these were the leaders and the ones that were pushing on Aaron to make this calf. And, as we see, Aaron brought a great sin upon Israel as we read in verse 21. And Aaron, frankly, is partly responsible for the death of these three thousand people. So, that is the defining moment of Aaron.

Now, the Bible is there for our learning. The Bible is there for our understanding. So, what lessons can we learn from Aaron given his background, given the four areas that he had direct contact with God, and given this horrible moment that Aaron sinned so greatly? What lessons can we learn? We're going to talk about Five Lessons.

The First One is:

I. We cannot compromise with the Truth; we cannot water the Truth down.

We cannot do that. So, despite everything that Aaron had witnessed first hand—all the miracles, God speaking to him directly, the visions—he compromised with God's Law when he was put under pressure, despite what he had seen and heard. When pressure arrived, he caved in.

The question we have to ask: "Would I have done that? Would I have done exactly the same thing?" There is a lesson here because we know we are spiritual Israel. And we know there is going to come a time on spiritual Israel where there will be tremendous pressure to compromise just as there was pressure on Aaron to compromise.

Let's go to Revelation 13 and read verses 15 through 17. This is going to come upon spiritual Israel. We're going to read about the False Prophet and what the False Prophet does. Revelation 13:15:

Revelation 13:15. And he [the False Prophet] had power... (KJV)

That power came from Satan, will come from Satan.

Revelation 13:15b. ... to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, [But NOTICE this!] and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. (KJV)

Just like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego that we talked about a while back. Verse 16:

Revelation 13:16. And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17) And that no man might buy or sell, except that he had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. (KJV)

There is going to be a time where you can't feed your family if you don't compromise. You can't work if you don't compromise. You can't trade if you don't compromise. Aaron compromised. And we know that the penalty for compromise, ultimately, is death. And that should be a tremendous lesson for all of us that when pressure comes, we need to learn from Aaron despite what all Aaron saw. **We cannot cave in and compromise.**

The Second Lesson:

II. We cannot please people at the expense of obeying God.

We can't please people at the expense of obeying God. Aaron caved in to the will of those people around him who wanted him to do something that he knew was wrong. And in order to please the people or to appease the people, he caved in. He feared the Israelites more than he feared God. He feared for his life more than he feared God.

That happens to us in spiritual Israel today.

Let's go to Galatians 1 and verse 10.

Paul was faced, I'm sure, on a very frequent basis [with the question]: "Do I obey God or do I please men?" And all of us face this every day. We face it on our jobs. We face it in getting time off for the Feast and the Sabbath. We face it with our children in schools.

Galatians 1 and verse 10, Paul says:

Galatians 1:10. *For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. (KJV)*

If our goal is to please men, we are in the wrong Church! If our goal is to please men, we are on the wrong track. And Satan would want us to do that—to put men before God.

Now, the fact is all of us, humanly, we want people to be pleased with us. We want people to be happy with us. We all do. We don't want people throwing rocks at us. We don't want people calling and shouting over the phone or writing us e-mails that are flaming at the edges or anything like that. None of us want that!

And, one of the frustrations of being a minister, I'll tell you, is that if you do what is right, you are going to displease somebody somewhere and you're going to have to take the heat for it. It's just part of the territory.

And the same thing is true for all of us. When we do what is right in God's eyes, Satan is going to inspire—not inspire, but—to provoke somebody to come along and give us heat and try to get us to turn, try to get us to change. That's the way Satan operates. And if you do what is right, you're going to

displease somebody, somewhere, someway and they're going to put heat on you.

That's exactly what happened to Aaron. And he caved in. And the lesson for us is: **We cannot please men at the expense of pleasing God.** We just cannot do that.

The Third Lesson is:

III. We must take responsibility for our actions.

Now, what did Aaron do? The first thing? What did he do? He blamed the people. And then, he denied he had anything to do with that molten calf. "Out popped this calf. The calf-fairy did it. I didn't do it. I had nothing to do with it."

I have never seen this more than we see it in the Church in the last few years. People [are] blaming anything and anybody other than themselves. People [are] getting into all kinds of trouble, all kinds of problems. And it just amazes me that they can point to this person as their problem, or that person as their problem, or this circumstance as their problem, or I even had somebody say, "Well, it's all Satan's problems. He's the one that's responsible for all this."

It reminded me of that comedian back in the 70s, Flip Wilson. He imitated... I can't remember her name right now, but he did a hilarious imitation of a black lady that was this brassy black lady. And one of the famous sayings, other than "What you see is what you get" (That's where that started.), was she would say quite frequently, "The Devil made me do it."

And people blame Satan. They blame others. They blame circumstances. They blame society. They blame anybody but themselves just like Aaron.

We can't do that. The mark of a converted mind is the ability to admit you are wrong. That's one of the things when you deal with a problem, you can tell if you're working with a carnal mind or a converted mind. The converted mind says, "Yes, I am wrong. I have made this mistake. I am sorry. I hurt other people. I see myself." That's a converted mind.

An unconverted mind says it's "Their fault. They did that. And this other person over here, they did that. And this other person over here, they did that."

I can remember talking to several people over the last five or six years saying, "Okay. Now, you have a problem with this person and you have a problem with this person. And you have a problem with that group and you have a problem with this other group over here. And you have a problem with this minister and that minister and this other minister over here. What is the common denominator of all of that? Because this minister doesn't have a problem with the other minister; this congregation doesn't have a problem with that congregation; this individual doesn't have a problem with the other individual that you just named. What is the common denominator?" And you get this blank look.

And the common denominator, you finally have to say it because they're not getting it. You say, "The common denominator is you. You have a problem here and here and here and here. And maybe, just maybe, you should look at yourself and acknowledge the possibility—as remote as it might be—that you might be part of the problem."

Aaron didn't do that and people, all too often, don't do that today. David, despite the horrible sins that he committed, David took responsibility for his actions. At the end of the day after the confrontation with Nathan, the light bulb went on; the gong hit him over the head, big hammer, and he took responsibility.

Let's go to Psalm 51 and verse 3. David wrote this Psalm after the encounter with Nathan. And verse 3 tells us he accepted responsibility for his sins. David says:

Psalm 51:3. For I acknowledge my transgressions: (KJV)

"I acknowledge **my** transgressions."

Psalm 51:3b. ... and my sin is ever before me. (KJV)

And I've seen people in God's Church. They sinned a horrible sin. They got into problems with it. And then days, weeks, months later, they are quick to point out other people's sins and they forget that they sinned back some time ago.

Now, David said, "My sin is ever before me. I remember it. I don't forget that. I acknowledge my sin and I remember it every day because I don't want to repeat it. I don't want to go there again."

Look at chapter 38 and verse 18 of Psalms. David says something very interesting and, obviously, we're reading this today, thousands of years later. Psalm 38:18, he says:

Psalms 38:18. For I will declare my iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.
(KJV)

And he is declaring his iniquity to us today. How many millions of people down through the years who read the Bible... Obviously, only a small fraction was converted. But how many millions of them are aware of David's sin? Millions of people! He declared his iniquity. And it's obvious after the encounter with Nathan he was sorry his sin.

We must take responsibility for our actions—our words, our deeds, how we treat other people, the decisions we make.

And yet, the world today doesn't want to do that. Governments don't do it. Individuals don't do it. Churches don't do it. Ministers don't do it. Individual members don't do it. We have to learn that lesson.

The Fourth Lesson we can learn from Aaron and his example is that:

IV. We must stand on our own two feet.

As long as Moses was there, Aaron was fine. Aaron was a prophet. Aaron was a facilitator. Aaron was spokesman. He did everything God asked him to do. He did everything Moses asked him to do. And, as long as Moses was there, Aaron was fine. But when Moses was absent, trouble began.

There's a huge lesson in that for us today because Aaron looked too much to Moses. And when Moses said, "If anybody has any problems, see Aaron and Hur," and boy they had a problem! And Aaron caved in.

He walked **by sight**. He walked by sight. He saw the people surrounding him. He saw maybe their anger or their threats or their perceived threats. And he caved in. Remember 2 Corinthians 5:7? We won't turn there. Very simply it says: "**We walk by faith and not by sight.**"

And Aaron did not stand on his on two feet. When they had first come to him if he had said, "No, we are not going to do this. This is against God's Law. Don't you remember the Covenant that we just agreed to? Don't you remember the Second Commandment? How dare you do this!" and then called for others,

the Levites, his own tribe, to offer help, they would have done that, but he caved in. He didn't offer any push back at all.

Let's go to Philippians 2 and verse 12. Paul admonished the New Testament Church and admonished us today and admonished the Church at Philippi this very, very thing. Philippians 2 verse 12, he's acknowledging that they obeyed in his presence. Now, he's encouraging them to obey even more in his absence. Philippians 2:12:

Philippians 2:12. Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. (KJV)

"You have to work it out yourselves. I am not going to be there to wet nurse you into the Kingdom of God. You're not going to get into the Kingdom of God on my coattails."

And I wish the Churches of God would learn that lesson today. People think they're going to get into the [Kingdom] on the coattails of a minister or a leader or a particular group just because they're there. They don't have to do anything, "just warm a seat and we'll just go right into the Kingdom. We'll go right into the Place of Safety." That is not true! Paul says, "When I am gone, **even more so work out your salvation** with fear and trembling."

And there is going to come a time on each one of us... It's happened already many times. It's going to continue to happen until the very end that God will test us as He did with Aaron to see if we can stand on our own two feet—us obeying God despite enormous pressure. Are we going to stand on our own two feet or do we need somebody standing right next to us as Moses was standing next to Aaron? And Aaron relied on him. Then Moses goes away and all of a sudden everything changes. God is going to put us through that to see if we stand on our own two feet.

The Fifth and Last Lesson:

V. It is only through God's mercy that we can survive.

It is only because of God's mercy that we can survive.

Now, let's ask the question. We haven't covered this yet in Aaron's defining moment. What was God's reaction to Aaron's compromise? Did God say,

"Okay, Aaron. They threatened your life. Don't worry. I understand. We'll make it all right in the end."? Did God say that to Aaron?

Well, let's go to Deuteronomy chapter 9. We'll begin in verse 7 and see what God's reaction to Aaron's sin was. Now remember, Moses wrote Deuteronomy prior to Israel entering into the Promised Land, prior to his death outside the Promised Land. And he is reminding them of all that has gone before. Deuteronomy 9:7:

Deuteronomy 9:7. *Remember* [he says], and *forget not*, (KJV)

Now, that applies to us today. We cannot forget these lessons!

Deuteronomy 9:7b. *... how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that you did depart out of the land of Egypt, until you came unto this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD. (KJV)*

He's saying, "Look, Israel! From the day we left, you have been rebellious. From the day we left, there has been a litany of problems and trouble." Verse 8:

Deuteronomy 9:8-9 *Also in Horeb you provoked the Eternal to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you to have destroyed you.
9) When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mountain forty days and forty nights, [he's reminding them] I didn't eat bread I didn't drink water: (KJV)*

Verse 15:

Deuteronomy 9:15-16 *So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire: and the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands.
16) And I looked, and, behold, you had sinned against the LORD your God, and had made you a molten calf: (KJV)*

He reminded them. He said:

Deuteronomy 9:16b-18 *You had turned aside quickly out of the way which the Lord had commanded you.
17) And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and*

broke them before your eyes.

18) And I fell down before the LORD, (KJV)

The margin says: "I prostrated myself before God." And he said:

Deuteronomy 9:18b. [I did it just the same way I had done before],
*forty days and forty nights: I didn't either eat bread, nor drink water,
because of all your sins which you sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight
of the Eternal, to provoke him to anger. (KJV)*

He knew God was... As he {Moses} looked down on that calf and saw them singing and dancing and doing all the stuff that they did, he knew God's anger was increasing and increasing. And he fell down flat on his face and asked God to forgive them.

Verse 19:

Deuteronomy 9:19. *For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure,
wherewith the Eternal was angry against you to destroy you. But the
LORD listened unto me at that time also. (KJV)*

Now notice verse 20 relative to Aaron.

Deuteronomy 9:20. *And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have
destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time. (KJV)*

This Hebrew word for destroyed is *shamad* (*shaw-mad'*) and it means "to bring to nothing or to utterly perish."

This means that if Moses hadn't interceded, God would have just fried Aaron to a crisp along with the nation of Israel. God was not happy. God did not offer excuses. God didn't pat him on the back and say, "Well, you tried." God was going to just blast him from existence totally. Aaron would have been destroyed if it wasn't for God's mercy. And remember that after that God allowed Aaron to continue serving God as His high priest. He allowed him to do that through mercy.

And, of course, **it's only through mercy that we make it** because none of us are perfect. We all make mistakes. We all sin. Ministers, members, we all sin and it's only through God's mercy that we can make it. We must learn that lesson because some people today think they can make it on their deeds; they can make it on their righteousness; they can make it on what they do for

God. "We've done all these things (Matthew 25, the Sheep and the Goats). We preached this. We've done this. Look at what we've done God." And it's only through God's mercy that we will make it.

Let's conclude. We began with a question. Was it easier for those in Biblical times? Was it easier for them because of what they saw, what they experienced? Was it easier for them to not compromise? Because they actually saw these miracles; they actually observed them and in some cases, they actually were used in performing them?

Because none of us have seen what Aaron saw! None of us saw the Red Sea part. None of saw the miracles in Egypt. None of us has ever been used by God to perform these kinds of dramatic miracles. None of us have seen God's throne and in vision ate and drank with God. And none of us have been asked to be His personal minister.

So, if Aaron could experience all of these miracles, all of these events, and, yet, still compromise, so can we! If he did, despite seeing all of that, compromise, we can do the same thing.

But there is a difference between us and Aaron, and herein lies the answer. The Bible isn't clear if Aaron will be in the First Resurrection. The Bible isn't clear if Aaron had God's holy spirit, because, unlike Moses, Aaron isn't mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11. And you find nowhere in the Bible where he is mentioned as having an office or a place in the World Tomorrow. You don't find that in the Bible. And it would be logical in Hebrews chapter 11 where Moses is mentioned God could have said "Moses and Aaron," but it doesn't. Nowhere is Aaron mentioned as being in the World Tomorrow or as being one of the ones that {will} have a position in the World Tomorrow.

Now, if it is true—and I say "if" because we don't know for sure, but if it is true—that Aaron did not have God's holy spirit, then today we have a tool that Aaron did not.

Now, obviously, God's spirit inspired Aaron, just as it did with those who built the Tabernacle, who built the Temple, who made Aaron's garments. God's spirit was with them but not in them and they were inspired to do wonderful things. It seems to me Aaron was inspired to do wonderful things by God, but God's spirit was not inside Aaron.

And if that is the case, we today have a tool that Aaron did not have and that tool makes all the difference. Because, I'm telling you, we can see mighty

miracles—and maybe we will before it's all done—we can even perform mighty miracles; we can even hear God's voice; or we can even see God's throne in a vision; **but if we do not have God's holy spirit working in us, we will fail just like Aaron failed.**

Let's go to Romans chapter 8 and begin in verse 6, final Scripture. If we don't have God's spirit working in us, we will compromise just like Aaron compromised. Aaron did fail and he was almost destroyed. He came very close to being destroyed. Romans 8 and verse 6, this is the key. This is the answer.

Romans 8:6. *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (KJV)*

Aaron came that close to death, very close. Of course, he's dead now. Verse 7:

Romans 8:7-8 *Because the carnal mind is enmity [or the enemy of] against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

8) *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (KJV)*

The key we find in verse 14.

Romans 8:14. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (KJV)*

And it is clear that when Aaron was surrounded by those people demanding that he make an idol that he was not being led by the spirit of God at all. And if we are not being led by the spirit of God, we will do exactly the same thing.

So, the point is:

It was not easier for them back then because they saw all these miracles.

That didn't change anything because they did not have God's holy spirit. We know in Deuteronomy 5:29—we won't turn there—that God said:

Deuteronomy 5:29. *O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, and it would be a blessing unto them.... (KJV)*

So, the key—all of this comes down to the key.

- Are we being led by God's holy spirit?
- Are we exercising God's holy spirit daily in our lives?

If we are, then we will not follow the example of Aaron.

However, if we don't allow God's spirit to lead us, if we drift far from God, then we will, indeed, follow the example of Aaron.

So, if we allow God's spirit to lead us, we do not need to witness these gigantic miracles to obey God without compromise. If God's spirit is with us, we don't need them because we have God's spirit.

They saw the miracles; didn't have God's spirit and they disobeyed.

We didn't see the miracles. We have God's holy spirit. And we are told we can make it by allowing God's spirit to lead us and guide us.

So, let's all learn "The Lessons from the Life of Aaron."