

...the main points again

The difference between being in love and being in love with
the idea of being in love
Between faith in God and looking to the idea of God...

Panis et circenses

Giving the people what they want to keep power

'Come make us gods!'

These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.

Exodus 32.4, 1 Kings 12.28

OR

*"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the
land of slavery.*

Exodus 20.2

No revelation, no direction

*Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint;
but blessed are those who heed wisdom's instruction.*

- Proverbs 29.18; cf. Romans 1.22-25; 1 Corinthians 10.6ff

*The people had exchanged the invisible God who had led them
by his spoken word for a visible thing which could not speak*

- Alec Motyer



What God made while the people made an idol...

...the defining word

The God who relents when Moses speaks

⁵ Then the word of the LORD came to me. ⁶ He said, "Can I not do with you, house of Israel, as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, house of Israel. ⁷ If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, ⁸ and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. ⁹ And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, ¹⁰ and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.

- Jeremiah 18

Doing all that is humanly possible to make redress:

- Addressing leadership
- Removing idols
- Identifying the people of God- as opposed to the people of the idea of God

An awesome 'perhaps'

When all that is humanly possible is not enough...

²⁶ Jesus looked at them and said, "With human beings this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

- Matthew 19.26

NOT an idea of God but the lover of our souls,

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- 2 Corinthians 5.21

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

- Colossians 3.2-3

...So what...

Read Exodus 32 again...

Try thinking about the passage from the different points of view: how does it seem through the eyes of the people, of Moses, of Aaron and if you feel bold enough what impression do you get of God's view?

Why do the people demand the creation of the calf?
Is the calf a new God, a representation of God or a mixture of different things?
Read the first three commandments in Exodus 20: in what ways are these commandments broken in this incident?
How easy is it for us to replace God with our idea of God?
What might this mean in the light of the first three commandments?

Read verses 9-14.

How do you feel about the suggestion of a God here who listens to a human being and changes his mind?
Read Jeremiah 18.5-10 and the following commentary,
God himself, who does not change nevertheless will change his previously announced response to man, depending on what the latter does
Do you agree? How might this affect your praying?

The Old Testament is full of reforms and times of falling away.
Discuss together the human actions that Moses leads the people through in verses 21-end.
Do we need to have an accountable leadership, confess, remove our idols and challenge ourselves to be the people of Jesus not the people of an idea of Jesus?

Finish by reading 2 Corinthians 5.21 and sharing your thoughts on the cross in the light of the 'perhaps' in v.30...

Sunday February 15th 2009



Travels with my Father

Pop Idol
Exodus 32

Devoted to Christ, his people, his mission