

SPOILING EGYPT

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God made many great promises to his faithful servant Abraham. These promises included making of him a great nation, with innumerable descendants, giving them the land of Canaan for an inheritance, and blessing all nations through his seed (Gen 12:1-7; 13:14-18; 15:1-8; 17:1-8; 22:15-18). Of course, the promise of blessing all nations through Abraham's seed was a prophecy of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:25-26; Gal 3:16). But God's promises to Abraham also included the "horrifying" elements of 400 years of affliction in Egypt (Gen 15:12-13). Genesis 15:14 says, "*And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.*" Abraham's seed would be delivered by God's judgment upon Egypt. And then the Israelites would spoil the Egyptians, coming out with great substance.

The fulfillment of God's promise

In Exodus chapter three, the Lord spoke to Moses out of the burning bush by Mount Horeb. In verses 16-20, He told Moses that He would deliver Israel from Egypt and give them the land of Canaan after stretching out His mighty hand and smiting the Egyptians. In verses 21-22, He also said to Moses, "*And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: but every woman shall borrow of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.*" From what God had foretold to Abraham, it is clear that the spoiling of the Egyptians by Israel was no "spur of the moment" decision. But now it was time for it to happen. As God promised Abraham, Israel was delivered 430 years after they came down to Egypt (Exod 12:40-41). Exodus 12:35-36 says, "*And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.*"

A bad use of the spoil

What became of the great spoil that Israel obtained from the Egyptians when they left? While Moses was up in the mountain for 40 days and nights, receiving the law from God for Israel, the Israelites committed a great sin. Exodus 32:1-6 says, "*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. 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. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before*

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(continued)

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.” Where did all that gold that decorated the ears of the Israelites’ wives and children come from? From Egypt! That is precisely what God had told Moses to get the people to do with the spoil (Exod 3:21-22). Now they made a golden calf out of their spoil and worshiped it! Moses saw what they were doing when he descended from the mount, and broke the stone tablets in anger (Exod 32:15-19). “And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it” (Exod 32:20). Also, “the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made” (Exod 32:35).

A good use of the spoil

Other than the spoil that they ended up drinking, Israel still had much gold left from what they had taken from the Egyptians. God commanded the people to remove their remaining ornaments (Exod 33:4-6). It is incredible that Israel was using the spoil of Egypt to make an idol at the very time Moses was in the mountain being instructed by God to get the people to use that spoil for something good. God called Moses up to into Mount Sinai for forty days and nights (Exod 24:12-18). The *first recorded words* by God to Moses in the mount pertained to the use of gold and fine linen in His service. “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: *of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.* And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ hair, and rams’ skins dyed red, and badgers’ skins, and shittim wood, oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it” (Exod 25:1-9). After the problem of the golden calf was over, the Israelites “came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord’s offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered an offering of gold unto the Lord. And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers’ skins, brought them” (Exod 35:21-23). Moses used this offering to complete the work God gave to him in making the tabernacle and everything that pertained its service (Exod 40:16-17,33). If only God’s people had used His blessings to serve and glorify Him to start with instead of for their own wicked purposes!