

Exodus 63 – Rebellion Against Moses and God

Exodus (Names) – Changing the World
Dr. Leon L. Sanders Exodus 32:17-35

Another Chiastic Structure

- Chiastic (χιαστικό) shows symmetrical unity of a text repeated in reverse order
- Highlighted is God’s forgiveness, Moses’ intercession & their sin
- Shows interrelationships

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TABLE 1
LITERARY STRUCTURE OF EXODUS 32:1-35A

A. 32:1-4 People sin, and Aaron (YHWH's High Priest) leads
B. 32:5-26 YHWH's new statutes and 'difficult' responses
C. 32:27-34 Moses intercedes
D. 32:35-36 Moses goes down the mountain
E. 32:37-38 Judgment: investigative phase
F. 32:39-40 Opportunity for repentance
G. 32:41-42 Judgment: executive phase
H. 32:43-44 Moses intercedes
I. 32:45-46 YHWH's new statutes, responses, and 'difficult'
A'. 32:47-48 YHWH acts, and People react

Example of Stone Tablet

- Covenant stones were small, written both sides
- God wrote these tablets for His People (Ex 32:15-16)
- Only the Ten Words were written, basis of His holy covenant (Ex 34:28)



Moses Goes Back to Camp

- Moses picks up Joshua further down the Mount
 - Joshua hears the noise as sounds of war (*positive view*)
 - Moses knows the noise as joy of rebellion (*informed view*)
- Upon entering the camp Moses is confronted by the sight of the Golden Calf and their open rebellion
- Moses displays anger, violation of God's holiness by the people

Moses Has a Temper

- Moses {like us} has a "besetting sin(s)" which is his [our] "thorn(s) in the flesh" - His temper {Anger}
 - Moses in *anger* killed the Egyptian taskmaster (Ex 2:11-15)
 - Moses *angry* when they sought to save the manna (Ex 16:20)
 - Moses' *anger* will keep him from entering Israel (Deu 20:1-11)
- Moses *angrily* broke the stones God had written (*Holy*)

A Misinterpretation

- Some commentators write that Moses broke the covenant stones to symbolize the people breaking their covenant with God in making the idol {Ten Words}
- Problem: The covenant meal has not occurred as Moses brought the stones with him that God had written while he was on the Mount; people had *heard* the Ten Words but no covenant till it was read to them

Moses Forgets Forgiveness

- When Moses asked God to forgive the people, he did not understand their sin *against him*
- Seething with anger at the sight of their rebellion, he breaks the stones, God's holy words



What is Unsaid?

- There is an unspoken implication we must address:
 - When the elders came to Aaron speaking ill of Moses ("this man...") they implied a change in leadership
 - In Ancient Kingdoms to change god is to change leadership; they rejected Moses and his power base, God
 - Golden Calf was a *visual* change of leadership; rebellion displaced God and Moses, a struggle that will continue through OT till the stauros (*Worshiped false Moses in OT*)

Moses Angry Over Usurpation

- Moses trained in Pharaoh's court and exposed to palace intrigues; thus, he recognizes true intent quickly
 - He understood this as a challenge to his leadership
 - Breaking the Ten Words was a public condemnation of their people usurping him as they heard the Ten Words
 - Moses reestablishes leadership holding those refusing to repent {leadership} responsible for the rebellion of tribes

Drinking the Idol

- Ancient ritual of humiliation of one's god
 - Burning the inner wooden frame
 - Grinding the gold finely, placing it in water
 - Making the people drink it
- Demonstrated the powerlessness of their god, source of their rebellion against God and God's intercessor

Aaron Called to Accountability

- Moses confronts Aaron for his poor leadership
 - Aaron was appointed leader in Moses' absence
 - He was to restrain the people as already instructed
 - He must give an account of his role in this rebellion
- Aaron blames the people claiming they were uncontrollable and he was simply *containing* them

Aaron's Magic

- It was Moses who wanted a spokesman as he was not eloquent, so God gave him Aaron (Ex. 4:10-17)
- Aaron, like Adam, chose followed sin, blaming others
 - People were evil, he feared them, obeyed them, not God; he did not pray or confront their sin (No Faith)
 - He collected their gold, threw it into the fire and out came the Golden Calf - Voila! (He aided their sin)

Moses Issues a Call for Loyalty

- Levites the only tribe to answer Moses' call
- Moses directs the Levites to kill the rebels sparing no one regardless of their relationship and about 3,000 die



Core of Rebellion Remains

- Moses understands that this rebellion can lead to their destruction if left unchecked
 - Without God they are alone in the wilderness
 - Their destruction will be the end of God's message to the nations who are watching them
 - Their destruction would send the message of God's inability to bring His people to their land - no salvation

Moses' Leadership Reaffirmed

- The rebellion against God, and Moses, quashed
- Levites chosen for the priesthood as they were the only tribe to follow God, and Moses {Despite Aaron's failure to trust God his will be *high priest* - God's grace}
- They acted in accordance with Joseph's prophecy of Levi's tendency to violence and wrath (Ge 49:5-7; Nu 1:47-51)

Moses Intercedes for the People

- Moses speaks to the people
 - Reestablishes his leadership based on God's holiness
 - They sinned greatly in their rebellion
 - He will seek to make atonement for them with God
- Crisis over, he seeks to reunify them with God via grace and forgiveness

Moses Again Shows His Growth

- Moses shows us how to pray repentantly
 - He admits the sin of the people
 - He asks God to forgive them
 - Moses offers himself as a sacrifice for their sin; however, his sacrifice is insufficient since he has also sinned
- God declares that each person must answer for their own sin of rejecting Him by His rejection of them

Ending on Prophetic Note

- God tells Moses to continue leading the people as guided by His Angel (Christ) to their land
- God will judge His people, Israel, in due time (9-30-47, Ze 12:10, 13:6, 14:1-9)
- This is the story of the Old Testament and its conclusion in Revelation (4:20)

This Rebellion Mirrors History

Hebrews

- Rejected God and Moses
- Changed God's nature: Golden Calf
- Chastened for their sin
- Returned to God and Moses

Jews

- Rejected God and Christ
- Changed God's Words: Moses and Law (Talmud)
- Chasten: Great Tribulation
- Will repent and accept God and Christ

This Rebellion Mirrors Us

- Church history replete with many attempts to replace true faith in Christ with man's religions
- Axial Age religions and Christendom demonstrate man's rejection of God and His Word
- Those who reject His salvation will answer for their own sin being rejected by Him for lacking His holiness

There is Only One Sacrifice

- Those who reject the sacrifice of Christ must answer with their own sacrifice (Rev. 20:11-15)
 - White Throne: each person will be held accountable
 - Their defense (words & works) condemn them: unholy
 - Cast into the Lake of Fire, Seraphim will seek to find God's holiness in them, they will search for eternity
- Only in Christ's holiness is one sufficient for salvation