

THE GOLDEN CALF

Old Testament Lesson #41

God told Moses to come up to Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:12). Moses went up with Joshua (who stopped partway up) and left his brother Aaron in charge of the camp of Israel down below. The LORD gave Moses two tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments on them. Moses and Joshua were away on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights (Exodus 24:18).

Moses was away so long the people thought that he was never coming back. They cried to Aaron to make gods for them. He took their gold jewelry and molded the pieces into the shape of a calf, and the people said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" In the morning, the people brought offerings of food and drink and started a wild party (Exodus 32:1-6).

God knew what was happening and told Moses to go down at once. God told him what they had done and spoke of his desire to kill them and make a great nation out of Moses (Exodus 32:10). Moses interceded for them, and the LORD changed his mind about destroying them. Moses hurried down with the two tablets of stone.

He found everyone was singing and dancing around the calf. He threw the tablets down and broke them. In three deliberate steps, Moses set out to overcome the idolatry:

1. He ground the golden calf to powder, spread the powder on the water and made the people drink it.
2. He then dealt with Aaron, whose weakness allowed this idolatry (when a demonstration of strength may have stopped it). He was spared and pardoned because Moses prayed for him (Deuteronomy 9:20).
3. He then sought out those primarily responsible for the idolatry. With the assistance of the tribe of Levi, which stood faithfully with him, he executed 3,000 idolaters.

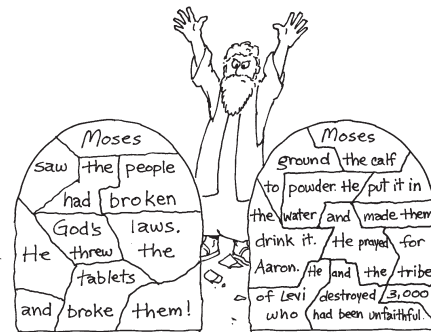
POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- This incident occurred only 40 days after the people had seen the power of the LORD displayed on Mount Sinai. Not long before that, they'd been delivered from the Egyptians by God's mighty hand. They quickly forgot God's reliability.
- Their sin was worshiping another god (who was really no god at all).

The Golden Calf

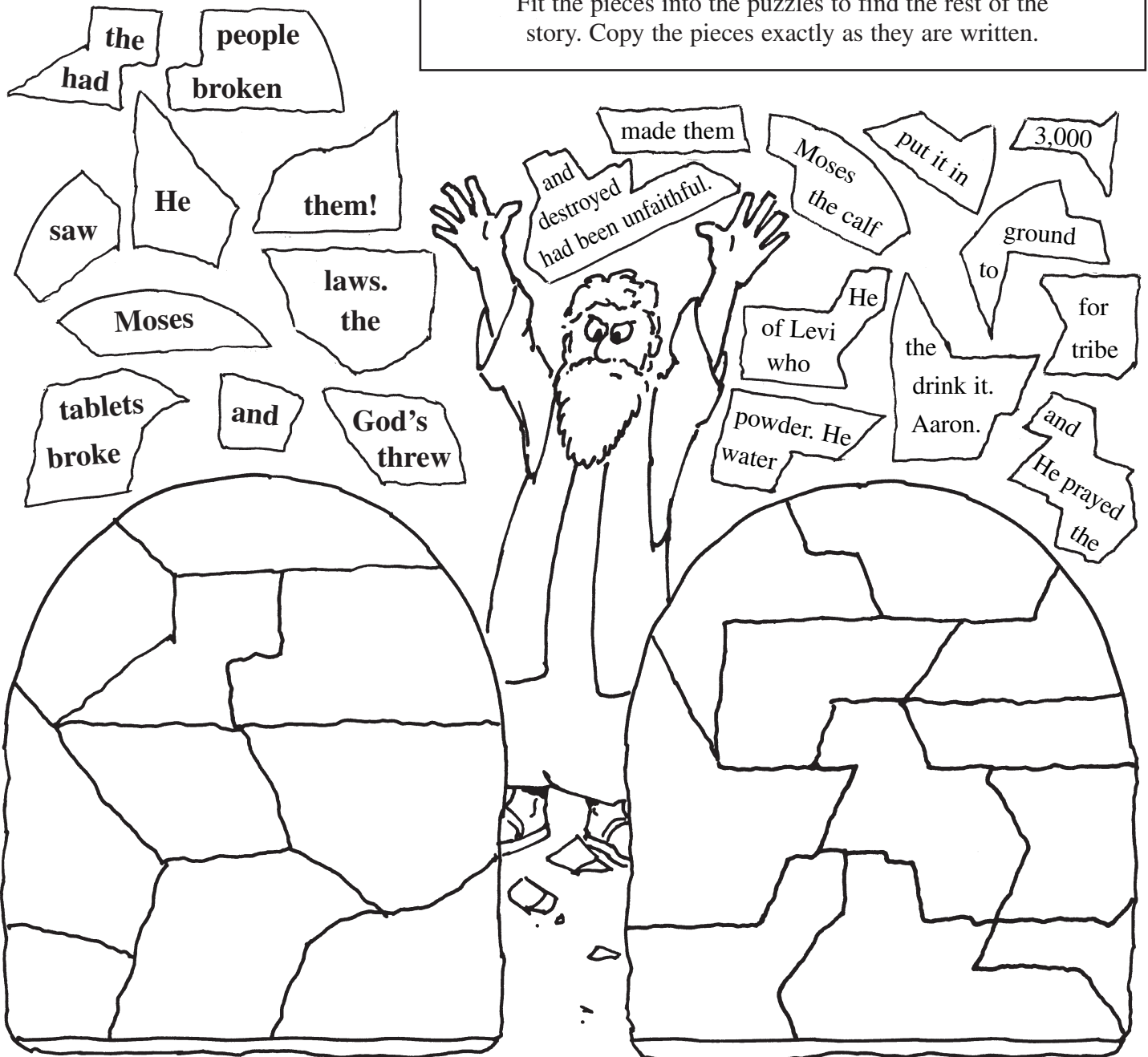
- I. Moses obeyed God and went to Mount Sinai.
 - A. Aaron stayed with the Israelites.
 - B. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments written on tablets.
 - C. Moses was on the mountain for 40 days.
- II. The people thought Moses would never return.
 - A. They wanted Aaron to make gods for them.
 - B. Aaron agreed and shaped their jewelry into a gold calf.
 - C. The people worshiped the calf and started a party.
- III. God was so angry he told Moses he felt like destroying the people.
 - A. Moses interceded for them, and God changed his mind about destroying the people.
 - B. Moses went down the mountain with the stone tablets.
- IV. Moses found the party and was furious.
 - A. He broke the tablets.
 - B. He destroyed the golden calf.
 - C. He reproved Aaron and prayed for him.
 - D. Moses and the tribe of Levi executed the 3,000 idolaters.

ANSWER KEY:



God was angry! He wanted to destroy the people who were worshipping the golden calf. Moses begged Him not to, and the Lord changed His mind. Moses hurried down the mountain with the 2 stone tablets of the Ten Commandments.

Fit the pieces into the puzzles to find the rest of the story. Copy the pieces exactly as they are written.

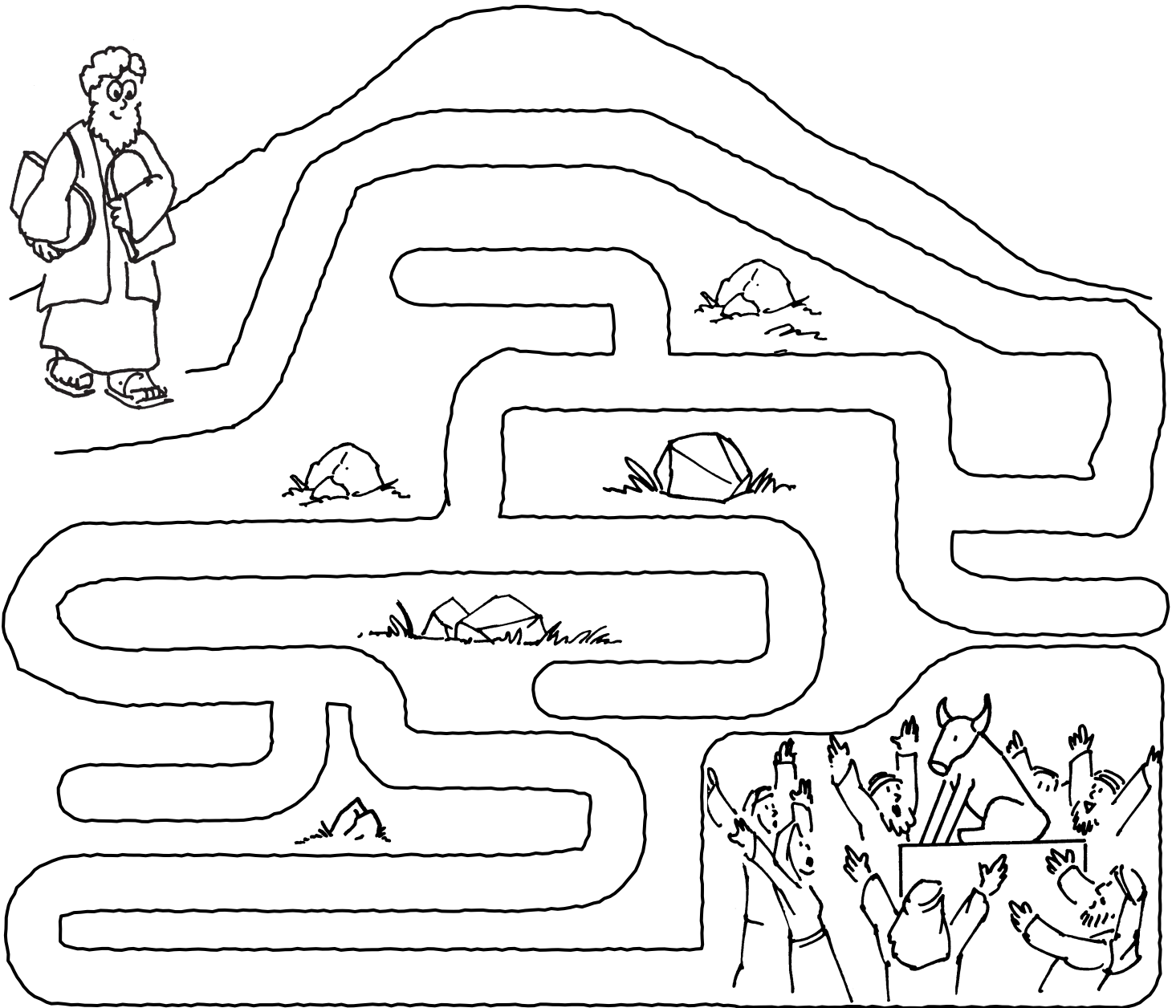


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oses came down the mountain and found the people worshipping a false God. He became angry.

Help Moses down the mountain. Follow the path.



Name _____