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The Old Testament Lesson appointed for this morning is the story of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments, for the second time. The original copy, the original tablets of stone were broken, when Moses came down from Mt. Sinai and lost his temper because the Israelites were worshipping a golden calf. We might wonder why the Israelites chose to worship a golden calf, after witnessing the plagues of Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, the destruction of Pharaoh's chariots, the greatest chariot army in the world, and after being led by a pillar of cloud and pillar of fire through the wilderness, even after they were provided supernatural food, manna from heaven and quail, and water from a rock that miraculously followed them through the wilderness. As if this was not enough, a few chapters before the Lesson appointed for this morning, we know that God had come down in all His power and glory upon Mt. Sinai. We read *And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.* Exodus goes on to describe thunder and lightning, and the sound of trumpets which grew louder and louder accompanying the descent of God.

The people stood at the foot of the mountain and then moved further back when they saw the fire and lightning, and heard the great thunder, the trumpets, and the voices. They were terrified, and fearing for their lives they begged Moses to go up and speak with God. And so, Moses went up the mountain, where he received the Ten Commandments. Moses also made a covenant with God and the Israelites there at Mt. Sinai, and after they had promised to keep the covenant, God did something surprising. He invited Moses and seventy of the elders of Israel to come up to Him on the mount. And there Moses and the elders of Israel saw the Lord, Exodus reads, *And they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as if it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as if it were the body of heaven in His clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.* Moses would spend forty days and forty nights on the mountain with God. The Israelites, as fickle and unfaithful as ever, began to grumble that Moses must have died, and that they needed another god, who would lead them into the Promised Land. So, they took the jewelry they had

taken from the Egyptians, and Aaron, the brother of Moses, made for them a golden calf, an image of Baal, and they began to worship the golden calf.

After all that they had witnessed: God's provision through the wilderness, not even their sandals wore out while they traveled for years through the desert, after witnessing God Himself come down on Mt. Sinai, with thick clouds, thunder and lightning, earthquake, and the sound of trumpets, after hearing the audible voice of God for themselves, after a group of them saw God with their own eyes, and ate and drank with Him, even after all of this they ask for another god. They chose to worship an idol. They begged Aaron to make them a false god that they will have to carry through the wilderness into the Promised Land, even though God Himself had led them where they should go with *a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night*. We wonder how they could turn their back on God after having seen all this, even after witnessing the terrible and great power and glory of God? Perhaps it was because the power and glory of God terrified them. The one true God was beyond their comprehension, they saw His great and mighty acts and knew that He could not be controlled, and so, after these incredible displays, they were uneasy and uncomfortable with God Almighty.

A golden calf was much more manageable for them. Here was a god they could manipulate, lead around, goad, and prod, and offer reasonable favors and sacrifices. Here was a god, limited and defined by their space and on their time. Such a god would require limited worship and, most surely, would not object to their immoral and selfish desires and designs. Such a god would require nothing so grand as holiness and righteousness of heart. The golden calf should remind us all the kinds of gods men worship today in our contemporary world. Think about how many people and even lukewarm Christians in our own age have abandoned God the Holy Trinity. Perhaps the reality of God the Holy Trinity is now too high and mysterious for modern man. Such a God, after all, demands that we come to know Him with our minds and will Him in our hearts. Such a God makes us uncomfortable. We want a God we can easily understand, a God we can be comfortable with, a God we can get to carry out our own will in this world, rather than the other way round. There are those who say that the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity is uselessly complicated and confusing, antiquated, a fallacy, even a heresy. And yet the truth is that if God, the Holy Trinity, could be perfectly understood, then He would not be God, nevertheless He is a God who intends to be known and loved.

God intends to be known through His Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ. We recited today that Our Lord Jesus Christ is *both God, and Man; God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and Man of substance of His Mother, born in the world' Perfect God and perfect Man: of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting*. And there are those who are uncomfortable with this and parse the nature of Jesus into two extremes. There are those today who are uncomfortable with Jesus being fully God, and so they say that Jesus was just a great moral teacher, nothing more and nothing less. Then there are those today who are uncomfortable with Jesus being fully human, and so they overstress Jesus' divinity. It is interesting that those who over stress one nature of the other of Jesus' Person are also uncomfortable with Jesus' Mother, who either is somewhat important at Christmas time, or is almost held with the same regard as God Himself. And let us not forget perhaps the most overlooked Person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit, whom we celebrated last Sunday. The Holy Spirit is also God, Co-eternal and Co-equal with the God the Father and God the Son, not some ethereal emotion or feeling, but very much alive and at work in the world, our lives, and our hearts today.

The Holy Trinity is what we as faithful Christians are called to believe and confess. Those Christian saints and martyrs who have gone before us have died for this very belief, that God is one in three Persons. Which brings us to another major tenant of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, that even though God the Holy Trinity is incomprehensible to us, yet, even so, the Holy Trinity is at work in the lives of each faithful Christian. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit calls all of mankind into a relationship with Himself. God the Holy Spirit longs to renew His presence again in us this morning, bringing us to God the Father, through God the Son. God the Holy Trinity invites us this morning to a far greater feast than was prepared for Moses and the seventy elders on Mt. Sinai so very long ago. God the Holy Trinity prepares for us a supernatural meal of bread and wine, the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, so that *He may evermore live in us, and we in Him*. And we who have been born again by the water of baptism and the blood of Jesus Christ, are united to the worship happening right now around God's throne in heaven which we hear of in this morning's Epistle. For the goal of the Holy Trinity is that we will one day join that heavenly court, and worship him that *liveth for ever and ever, and cast [our] crown before the throne saying,*

*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure [we] are, and were created. Amen.*