

The Apis Bull-Understanding God part 1
Parminder Biant
October 24, 2020

I have a number of questions that have been sent in and I'll try to answer some of them. The questions have been from the brethren in France which was our purpose. If possible I want to answer two questions. I don't mean in this presentation I mean over this camp meeting.

The first question is about a study that I did in the recent past which was based upon a Bible verse taken from the book 1 John. 1 John 4:20. I'm not going to read the verse but I have had a significant amount of criticism on my explanation of this passage. This was taken from a series of studies in Portugal earlier this year. The subject deals with parable teaching.

Once again we see that parable teaching runs into conflict with our established ideas of truth. I wanted to give you these two questions at the beginning so that people can have an opportunity to consider these issues, these problems. How do parables work. When you take the reference point of 1 John 4:20, who takes the priority? Humans or God? The reason people ask this question is because what I taught appears to be in opposition to inspiration. Hopefully we will discuss this a little bit more in our studies.

A second question that I want to try to address is the subject of homeschooling. It may not be a large subject in this movement but for those families who it affects it's a significant issue. I know that people are going to be thinking the following thought, the reason why I'm bringing this subject up is because recently, at the beginning of October, President Emmanuel Macron of France made an announcement that next year, for the school year 2021-2022, homeschooling is going to be banned in France.

So the reason why I'm discussing the issue of homeschooling even though it's important for the brethren and families and members in France, someone had asked me this question previously. That's why I was wanting to address the subject at this camp.

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It just so happens that in this time frame this announcement [in France] was made so it seemed convenient on a number of fronts to address this question.

If you have any personal thoughts, any ideas on these on these two questions, please feel free to message me privately so I'll have an opportunity to consider your thoughts because you may have an opinion that would help other people in the movement and I can be used as a channel to facilitate that.

At the beginning of September we started a series of camp meetings. I believe this is the fourth camp meeting that we've had and I commented that I would have thoughts and ideas that would flow from one camp to the next. For those of you who have been listening to the Sabbath studies that I've been doing over the last few months on the subject of relationships, I've tried to keep the camp meeting studies and those sabbath studies separate but they have begun to merge.

Two weeks ago, I believe it was the 10th of October [2020], I did a sabbath presentation and that was to be an introductory thought on something that would take a couple of studies to do. That particular study [October 10, 2020] wasn't continued last Sabbath so I plan to continue it at the beginning of this camp meeting. We're going to begin with a short recap or review of what was presented on October the 10th [2020]. Those of you who are not familiar with what was discussed, I went back to a study that was presented five months ago on the 16th of May [2020]. It was a presentation done by Elder Tess titled "Worshipping the Apis Bull". I used that study as a reference point or a launching pad for the point I wanted to make.

The study that Elder Tess did was on the subject of the Apis bull. So I just want to have a review of what was studied two weeks ago. If you turn to the book of Exodus chapter 32 beginning with verse 1. I'll give you a bit of background. Moses is in Mount Horeb,

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in the mountain, and he's been there for approximately 46 days. You can see his sojourn in the mountain in the following chapters Exodus 24 and Exodus 34. I think you're all familiar with the fact that he's there for 46 days. It's divided into two parts, six days of preparation and forty days communion with God.

I've given some references. I'll write them down on the board. Exodus 24 and 34 and Patriarchs and Prophets page 313. If you read those passages it will give you some background of what Moses is doing. As Moses is there in the mountain there are problems in the camp of Israel.

We are in Exodus chapter 32:1 “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.’” Instead of addressing the problem Aaron tries to pacify the people. Though I don't want to make it the subject of this study I want to point out that this is a failure of leadership or organization.

One of the themes that you can pick up when you deal with the subject of the Apis bull, or what we would call the golden calf, is a study on what leadership or organization looks like. I want to remind every single one of us that at this juncture, when Moses comes down and he begins to deal with this problem he's going to instruct the people to deal with this mess.

If we were to drop down to verse 28 of the same chapter [Ex 32] it says the following “And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about 3,000 men.” I just want to pause for one moment and just make a comment. This is a subject that has become increasingly important to us, what I'm

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about to say. It's not just the sexist language of inspiration but it's also the sexist culture of inspiration.

Back in February of this year in Uganda I did a study on Deuteronomy 22:5; which is a study on what men and women are allowed to wear. In that study I connected it to chapter 20. Chapter 20 has to do with warfare.

In that study I made the following observation. You know that at Kadeshbarnea because of the sins of the people everyone over the age of 20 would die. Because we live in the 21st century we think every person died. But we identified in the Ugandan studies that when it said everyone died in reality the correct marker was that every man died. Men were to blame. Men got punished. The women were not part of that story

In the abomination of the golden calf, once again, it tells you that 3,000 men were slain. I want us to see how specific the Bible is. It says men. We know that we can tie up this number 3,000 that's found here with the story that's found in the book of Acts where 3,000 are baptized in one day. That's taken from Acts 2:41. Acts 2:41 reads as follows, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added *unto them* about 3,000 souls".

I want to make the following premise or argument that there has been a significant change from Mount Sinai to Pentecost. The 3,000 that were killed at Mount Sinai are identified as men. I'm not saying women were not killed but they're not counted. But when you come to the baptism at Pentecost those 3,000 are not called men they're called souls. I want to argue that it includes men and women. So from the Old Testament story to the New Testament story the way things are counted changes. It's just a small fascinating insight into the progressive work of God.

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Going back to the story of Exodus, what I've identified is when you deal with the subject of the Apis bull you're confronted with the subject of leadership and organization. You have to compare and contrast the two. Aaron - Moses. I want to remind us, if you need to be reminded, that in the eyes of the membership who was the good leader? Aaron. Who was the crazy man that couldn't control his emotions, that was severe and aggressive, confrontational; that forced people to do things against their will? That was Moses. You remember what they do with that calf? He grinds it to powder, throws the powder into the river, and he forces the people to drink their own idol. This was not their choice and this is the people that survive the slaying.

When you go to the story of Pentecost it's clear to see the subject of organization is being dealt with there as well. Those people, the 3,000, are now going to be confronted with two leaders : the conference structure and the disciples. Elder Tess has already addressed the subject that the disciples were already the leaders of the church but nobody knows that. These 3,000 don't.

We're in Acts 2. When you go to chapters 3 and 4 you see that this issue of a change of leadership now becomes public. There's an open discussion of who the leaders are because when the crippled man is healed at the gate Beautiful and the apostles are called, forced, to give an account of their behavior, what did they say? They reply to the Sanhedrin, the leaders, "is it better for us to obey you or to obey God?"

This is found in Acts chapter 5 verse 29. Peter says "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, 'We ought to obey God rather than men'" I want to remind us, if we're not sure about this, that such a statement is apostasy because the people he's talking to are not men. These are people who have been appointed by God They're God's appointed messengers. I'm speaking about the Sanhedrin not the disciples. When Peter states that he will obey God and not these humans he's not saying men in

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the context of human beings. He's talking about people who are self-appointed, people who no longer represent God.

This is something that comes up over and over again. Even in this movement people do not seem to understand what it means about serving God or serving humans. Following God or humans. Learning from God or humans. People use the phrase "I will study for myself. God will teach me".

In a recent camp meeting I addressed this issue in [Miller's] rule 14. Let me summarize this point, when Peter compares God and humans he's referring to humans who do not represent God. He's not speaking about God as a deity that lives far away. If you stick to the rules of parable teaching you'll remain safe.

Too many of us think what Peter is doing is the following: compare God, compare human. He's not doing that. What he's doing is comparing human with human. We should all allow the rules and the methodology of parables to guide us on this issue. He's saying, "I am the new leader." You need to compare them, the Sanhedrin, with me, not with a spiritual being that lives billions of miles away in heaven. This point ties back to the question that I was asked, 1 John 4:20. You can no longer with a good conscience compare spirit with human, God with a person. It's not a legitimate comparison.

The point that we want to see is that the subject of the Apis bull will produce a shaking. The shaking is connected to apostasy of course but what also comes to light is that the subject of appropriate and correct leadership comes to view. We should not forget that.

The subject of the Apis bull was first brought to light in May this year [2020] and it's come back again in October but with deeper conviction in a more pointed fashion. I want to remind you what Elder Tess said in her presentation this morning. She spoke

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about the form and the spirit. She was speaking about equality. If you go back to the study of the Apis bull in May [16th] this year [2020]. The time stamp is 18 minutes, if you want to review it. The point that she made in this morning's presentation is repeat of the point that she made five months ago. She spoke about the form, the Apis bull and then she moved on to the spirit.

When she moved onto the spirit she spoke about another story, King Saul, the spirit to be like the other nations. In that May [2020] presentation she speaks about not only the shape of the idol but the idol's character, the idol's personality. In her first presentation of this camp meeting she repeated the very same thought but said it slightly differently.

You'll remember 14 months ago a test was brought to the movement, it was the form of equality. It began in July but it came with force in August. People objected to something that I said, something that I did, at the International Camp meeting in August when I insisted, some people say when I forced, that I said that sisters were required to wear trousers, pants. People objected to that and one of the objections they said was "well I don't feel like doing it so if I wear trousers it won't be genuine." Those who were at the camp meeting know exactly what I said in response to that. I said "it's irrelevant what you feel what is relevant is what you do."

I said the very same thing at the last camp meeting a couple of weeks ago when I quoted from C.S. Lewis in his book *Mere Christianity*. He spoke of not consulting your feelings but just going through the motions. Which is exactly what was said last August 2019. That was the form of equality and now we're dealing with the spirit of equality.

When we're dealing with this issue which comes directly from the story of the golden calf, the Apis bull, you must know that one of the challenges that you will be confronted with is understanding what correct leadership looks like. How do you know what correct leadership even looks like? The only way you know anything is how? You

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have to compare it with something. If you want to know what good leadership looks like you compare it to bad. We spoke about this issue again in a recent camp meeting what good and bad leadership looks like. All of this is encapsulated in this study of the Apis bull.

Exodus 32:2: Aaron tells them to take off their jewelry in order for him to make a calf. "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'". Again I don't want to go into this issue but you'll notice that earrings are not something that women wear exclusively. It says your sons and your daughters The whole issue of jewelry is an interesting subject back then. Verse 3 they obey. Verse 4 he takes the jewelry and he creates this calf.

Verse 1 they say "make us gods". Verse 4 Aaron answers "These be thy gods, O Israel which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt". It's these passages, if you see commentary on them, that bring you to the understanding that this is the Apis bull that he has created at their behest, at their instruction. Whilst Apis in a simplistic way is a singular entity, it is a multifaceted god.

If you think Christianity is complicated Egyptian theology is even more convoluted and twisted. They have all these gods and each one of them has various roles. They have a god, Isaiah 46 verses one and onward. Now you have to take that god and you have to personify them. Different cultures personified god in different ways. The Greeks who considered themselves to be wise. Their personification was not 100 but it was mostly the personification into human beings. The Egyptians, who were a more ancient culture, they tended to personify god through creation or through creatures, animals.

They have this idea of life. Solomon speaks about this. There's a time to laugh, a time to cry; a time to live, a time to die; a time for war, a time for peace. Compare and

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contrast. There's always this tension. I lost count there but I think I gave you three couples which makes six. You have three pairs which makes six facets of human experience. They're not exclusive, it's more than that. You have to remember that idolatry is based upon true correct principles. Everything that you see came from somewhere, something. God.

I will call them the ancients. We won't use the horrible term idolaters. The reason why I say that is because they understood one thing: all creation is a reflection God. Which is exactly what you believe. You are a reflection of God. When you're happy, God is a happy person. When you're sad, God is a sad person. When you're angry, when you're happy, all of those emotions that you feel. You can go to the animal or the vegetation kingdom and you see the same issues, the same thoughts.

Idolatry is nothing more than what you and I do. When I say you and I, I mean what God instructs us to do. He says we are nothing more but a reflection of Him. Flip that around. If you want to know what God is like where would you go? Where would you look? You can't get a telescope and look at God in heaven. You find God all around you. When you look at people or when you look at yourself.

These ancients were not foolish. They knew that this cow was not literally God. They knew that. When you read your Bible you know that that Bible is not literally God; but we treat the Bible with reverence. Why? Because in some shape or form, depending on how you want to explain it, we see this book as an avenue or a vehicle or a doorway to God. It's only a small step to start off from that point to begin to idolize this book.

I'm not saying we should deface books but if this was just a normal book you wouldn't have much problems if I just ripped it up in front of you. Why would you have an objection if I did that with this book? It's because of what this book symbolizes.

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This is how idolatry works. There is very little space between truth and error. They're so close together you can't see any light between them. That's why we call things the counterfeit. What does parable teaching tell you? In fact what is the definition of parable? You take two things that are apart and you do what with them? You bring them together and the closer you bring them together the better your parable. This is why counterfeits work.

I want to summarize what I have been saying about the subject of the Apis bull. Idols are a physical representation or a form of God. People like ourselves may be offended by this concept. When I would suggest that the difference between idolatry and the truth is not as large as we might think. There's not much space between the truth and error.

This is not a coincidence, this is a principle. They have to be very similar otherwise they wouldn't be true idols and we could not compare our experience and understand our experience. That's why you need, I will just call it error, in order to understand truth. This idea that people use to suggest that if you want to understand counterfeit money you only study the true money is erroneous. You need to understand and see both.

When we speak about the Apis bull we're speaking about our own experience and thus far there are two issues that I've wanted to address. One of them is the issue of leadership; that when you speak about this subject, idolatry, the Apis bull, the subject of leadership comes up. It comes up at Mount Sinai and it comes up at Pentecost. Both places.

When we discuss the subject of leadership the only way to know what good leadership looks like is to compare it to bad. Moses and Aaron. The disciples, the Sanhedrin, the alpha and omega of ancient Israel. I want us to understand those parallels.

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Then we spoke about the form and the spirit. In May [2020] Elder Tess used the term character not spirit. There's no point in just having a form or shape without having an associated character to it. Anyone sensible would make sure that the form or the shape matches the character. If I want to represent something of stability, of strength, of permanency, I'm not going to represent those characteristics by a flowing river, by water. By the sea which is like waves that go back and forth. No stability, double minded.

But I live in a flood plain. A flood plain is an area of land where a river comes and floods the land every year. I give that example because that's the example of Egypt. The river Nile doesn't bring life just because it's a river. It brings life because it floods its banks and it spreads itself over the land bringing not only water but nutrients. Every year this river will bring life. If I want to represent life, conception, fertility, a river that floods its banks, that overflows would be a good representation.

The form has to correctly represent the character. I'm hoping we can all see that. These idols were carefully selected for that purpose. Here we come to the golden calf Apis. The last point that I was bringing up, Exodus chapter 32 verses 1 and 4 is that this, we call it a golden calf, but I'm going to change it to a bull, is not a singular god. It's many gods.

Many gods equals the following: the many facets or the many sides of God. Which is the same as you and me. We have many facets. I gave you six of them from Solomon. Whether you call it one god or lots of gods it's the same thing. A man and a woman, are they two separate entities or one entity? The 144,000 are they 144,000 people or are they one entity? It depends what model you're using to answer that question because it's both. They should move in harmony which makes them a singular entity. Husband and wife become one flesh.

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In the same way when we talk about God and we represent Him with these differing images. Either you can model it as one god with different character traits; but a nicer way to do it is to represent God with many different images. This is what the Egyptians did. They mixed it all up. It starts off simple. A bull has certain characteristics. We'll say strength so therefore the bull would just be one god the god of strength. There's a problem What's the problem? What happens to bulls? They die. How are you going to explain that?

Therefore that bull has to have certain attributes or characteristics that connect it to death. Now this bull will take on more than the characteristics of strength it has to take on other characteristics. That's why it says "let's make gods". This is a mature model. This is not something that the Israelites invented. This is a mature Egyptian model of God. When you do that then you realize that this bull represents either many facets of god or many gods. It's the same thing.

I've tried to explain why it says many gods or why it says let us make gods; because this god represents different facets of experience. Now Elder Tess has already addressed this subject and if you remember she mentioned four: courage which means you have a brave heart or a large heart. Strength, aggression or a fighting spirit. We might call it courageousness, fearlessness. If you were to think about a bull you would see that it has these characteristics.

Now what you have to do with this bull is make it special. How would you make a bull special? You give it immaculate conception. So it's mommy is not impregnated by a male cow. It gets impregnated by the holy spirit. We'll just call it light. In fact we'll call it a lightning bolt. This innocent virgin cow is going to be struck by lightning and we're going to have an immaculate conception and that's where this bull is going to come from and this cow will never give birth again.

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Now if all that sounds like Mary you begin to see how the counterfeit and the true come together. The parallels are scarily close to each other.

Now you know as well as I do what's the favorite past time of a bull? It's certainly not going to war and fight. It's not protecting the farmer from dangerous situations. What do bulls like doing the most? Playing with cows of course. [Which is] where we get the fourth characteristic of this bull, fertility. In the words of Moses what this bull likes to do, in the words of Exodus chapter 32:6 is the bull likes to play. For you and me that means it enjoys sex. Fertility.

That's why in verse 6 if you want to make God happy what would you do? You've got a couple of choices. You can go and have a fight with someone, your enemies; show how courageous you are because you've got a brave fighting spirit. But if there aren't any enemies around what could you do instead that is more pleasurable? You have an orgy. There it is. This is what they're doing in verse 6. This is this cow that is a multifaceted god.

We've explained a number of things about this god. As we close now, in preparation for our next study what I want to say is the following: In the studies that Elder Tess did that began this story, she mentioned all four points but she focused on these three [courage, strength, fighting spirit] as you picked up the characteristics of a king, which is why I went to 1 Samuel 8:4. She picked up the characteristics of a king which are these personality traits that they must have. I want to focus on this one. On fertility. That's what we're going to look at in our next presentation.