The Golden Calf

> *"And he took the calf which they had made and burned it in the fire, and pulverized it to powder, and scattered it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it"* **(Ex.32:20, AFV).**

Introduction

During the time that Moses and the Israelites were slaves in Egypt they learnt much from the Egyptians concerning metallurgy and chemistry. Gold artefacts found in Egypt show that around 3000BC Egyptians already had knowledge about the malleability of gold. Laboratory examination of ancient fragments of sheet gold found in Egypt showed that they could hammer out gold to a thickness of about 6 microns or 0.006 mm. *(Gold Technology in Ancient Egypt MASTERY OF METAL WORKING METHODS T. G. H. James).*

Some facts concerning the pliability of gold

Gold is the most malleable of all metals, meaning that it can be hammered into very thin sheets. So for example it can be spread out to a thickness of 0.1 micron (A stack of one thousand sheets of 0.1 micron gold sheets is about the same thickness as a piece of ordinary paper), *(https://www.chemicool.com/elements/gold-facts.html).*

So also, 1g of gold, about the size of a grain of rice, can be rolled out to cover 1 square meter and 28 grams can be stretched to a length of more than 5 km. Thin transparent sheets of gold are fixed to the cabin windows of some jet planes to prevent misting and icing. Gold can also be ground to such a fine powder that one granule of gold dust must be measured in nanometres. In the International System of Units one nanometre is defined as being one-billionth of a meter! A human hair, for example, is approximately 80,000- 100,000 nanometres thick. What is furthermore very interesting is that a suspension of fine particles of gold dust in water has the ability to colour it rose red.
(National Nanotechnology Initiative https://www.nano.gov/nanotech-101/what/nano-size).

Some kinds of red glass is so expensive because it is coloured by using colloidal gold (gold dust suspended in water).
(https://www.open.edu/openlearn/science-maths-technology/science/chemistry/properties-gold)

Moses probably knew that gold dust would colour water red and representing blood, he offered it to the Lord as an atonement for the sin of idolatry of the people:

> *"...Moses said to the people, "You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD. Perhaps I shall make an atonement for your sin*"(**Ex. 32:30).**

This incident was an Old Testament shadow type of what the blood of Jesus would do in the New Testament:

"In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the remission of sins" **(Eph. 1:7).**

> *"The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day..."* (**Joh. 6:54).**

What must also be considered is that when Israel, who had just recently left Egypt, saw the water that had the appearance of blood, they were reminded of what God had said about the blood that was applied to their door frames in Egypt (an atoning action), He would **Passover** them and not strike them with the plague:

> *"And when I see the blood, I will pass over you. And the plague shall not be upon you..."* **(Ex.12:13).**

Perhaps with **Leviticus 17:11** in mind, Moses had them drink of the water representing blood, to atone for their sin:
"...for it is the blood that makes an atonement for life..."

Drinking the "blood"

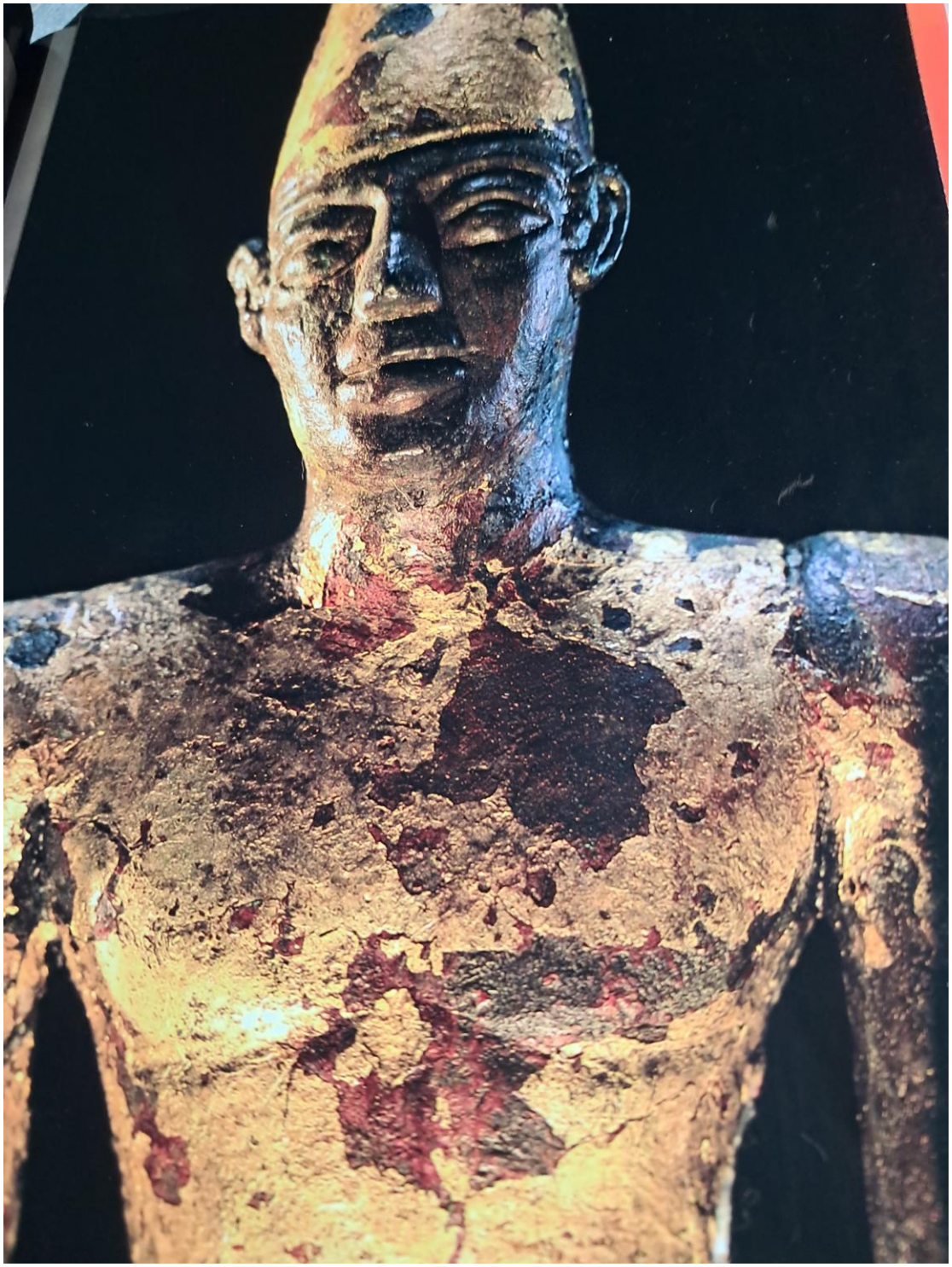
Surely Moses had to know that God prohibited the drinking of blood **(Gen. 9:4)**, so the "blood" that Moses had them drink wasn't real biological blood and it could therefore be a shadow type of the wine we drink during communion which represents the blood of Jesus. In Moses' case, as a shadow type, **it pointed forward** to the reality of Christ's work of redemption. In our case, when we drink the wine representing the blood of Jesus during communion, **we look back** to Christ's finished work of atonement on the cross:

> "*Knowing that you were not redeemed by corruptible things, by silver or gold, from your futile way of living...But by the precious blood of Christ..."* (**1 Pet. 1:18-19).**

Conclusion

Today still, to be saved, the sinner must, figuratively speaking, eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus. In reality it means that the sinner must repent of his or her sin, by faith accept Jesus as Saviour and trust in His substitutionary work on the cross.

Picture of figure plated with sheet gold



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