



# **The Sin of the Calf: The Rise of the Bible's Negative Attitude Toward the Golden Calf (The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies)**

*Youn Ho Chung*

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The relationship of the biblical tradition to golden calf worship seems to be entirely negative. In the Torah and the Book of Kings, harsh criticism is wielded against the golden calf the Israelites made in the wilderness (Exod 32; Deut 9:7-10:11) and the calves erected by Jeroboam ben Nebat (1 Kgs 12:26-33) at Dan and Bethel during his reign over the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Hence, the question arises as to whether Jeroboam in truth set up the golden calves in order to buck the postulates of the Israelite religion of his time; that is, was Jeroboam's golden calf really meant to lure Israel into worship of other gods or idolatry?

The research into the background and factors which motivated negative attitudes towards the Golden Calf will provide an insight as to when prohibition of images in the Israelite religion became crystallized and how it was indispensable in proclamation of the monotheism of YHWH.

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