

Steady

Exodus 32:1, 7-10, 19-20, 29

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A. Amidst God's Delays (v. 1):

1. See – They waited for Moses to return, after all they are nowhere near their homes and at the base of Mt. Sinai so they are looking for leadership and Moses stay on the mountain seem endless to them. They apparently were counting the days he has been gone and felt there is no way he is coming back. Moses was gone, with no signs that he was still alive, for about 40 days. They found it hard to trust God when they could not visibly see Moses or the fire and cloud. God did keep feeding them. No faith, they can only trust what they can see.
 - a) It would seem that the pillar of the cloud, which had gone before them from Succoth to Sinai, was now removed from the camp, and resting upon the “mount” where Moses was (ch. 24:15). [\[1\]](#)
2. Moses delayed to come down - Moses was completely set with spending his time with the Lord. Moses was in no rush to come back.
 - a) His absence in such a place, with so much yet to be done by way of provision and guidance, would have been problematic if even only a few days were involved. With the passage of a long period of time, the people are represented as nearly in a frenzy, some perhaps assuming Moses had deserted them, others more charitably fearing some tragedy had befallen their leader.[\[2\]](#)
3. The people assembled – When the people approached Aaron it was as if they were going to be continuously at war with him unless he does what they request. This particular word for assembly means to organize for war. It seems like they were highly volatile, and it was a large number of them which would have been very intimidating for Aaron.
4. Go before us - They (a very large volatile group) demanded that Aaron continuously and immediately make it his everyday mission to lead the process of designing a god for them since it seems like Yahweh and Moses has deserted them after placing them in the wilderness.
5. We do not know - They have completely no idea of what has become of Moses and most likely will never know. Joshua was not going to let them go up the mountain and no one

had any idea if Moses is still alive.

B. Worship Him Only (vs. 7-10):

1. Lord spoke – Not until the people were in full swing worshipping their false god, the Lord, who has all power and authority and sincerely wants a relationship with His people. He communicated with Moses with a specific message in relation to what they were doing. This is because what they are doing breaks the relationship, they have with God.
2. Corrupted themselves – On their own initiative the people willfully decided to pollute their worship of the Lord by worshipping a false god. This can also mean that they completely ruined themselves.
 - a) In other words, God was not saying to Moses that the Israelites were no longer capable of doing good (i.e., had become corrupt in the sense of being spoiled/polluted or the like), but that they had done something so wrong that it constituted acting corruptly. Thus, for example, the NRSV “have acted perversely” or the HCSB “have acted corruptly” more clearly capture the sense that the situation, while very serious, was not one of no hope whatsoever for Israel’s redemption.^[3]
3. Quickly turned aside – They once followed God as He led them with a cloud and a fire. Now that God is meeting with Moses and apparently those physical attributes of God are no longer there, the people of Israel willfully made a cognitive decision to change who and how they worship. So, in large numbers, with much force and violence, they persuaded Aaron to erect a god which they learned about in Egypt as a whole new way way of worship.
4. The way – The people of Israel clearly understood the divine will of God. “The way” is therefore, God’s righteous straight path that He has put in place for us (John 14:6; Matthew 7:13-14; 1 Timothy 6:14; 1 Timothy 4:2-5; Acts 2:42; 2 Peter 2:15-16).
5. I command them – God clearly constituted what He wanted them to do (Moses is coming from the meeting with God and the people have turned from God – what a contrast) and expected their obedience, especially since He is clearly their deliverer.
6. Make for themselves - After knowing what God had constituted for these people, because they do not see any evidence of God and Moses, they felt totally obligated to put a lot of energy, no matter how weary they became, to endeavor to build another god.
7. And they worship it – Not only did the Israelites willfully turn away from the Lord and purposefully created their own god, but they also actually prostrated themselves in an act of respect to the idol as if it is a superior being that they could trust to lead them. Humbling themselves before this idol was something they planned on doing forever.

8. Obstinate people – God describes Israel as arrogant, rebellious, stubborn like an ox who refuses to accept the heavy yoke on its neck and is unwilling to plow the field as directed by the farmer. They are below the mountain committing an act of treason.
9. My anger – God became intensely emotional so He would rather be this way alone. Their actions put them at war with God, who manifested His power before their eyes against the greatest nation at that time, as they worshipped an idol that can do nothing for them.
10. Destroy them; finished – God is so angry that He is contemplating totally consuming everyone that has committed treason against Him. I say contemplating because He told Moses what He is going to do before He does it. He is God He knows how Moses is going to respond so He tells Moses to leave Him alone.
11. I will make - God will continuously, endlessly obligate Himself to faithfully create (fashion) out of nothing the commitment He made with Abraham through Moses and re-establish a whole new group of people that would follow Him, and that nation will be great.

C. Be Accountable (vs. 19-20):

1. It came about – What God continuously wanted to do became what Moses wanted to do. Righteousness, especially after experiencing God’s goodness, is always going to be a godly standard that requires justice.
2. Anger burned – Moses became continuously, intensely emotional so that his anger became like an intense ravenous fire consuming him from the inside out.
3. Threw - Even though Moses had complete control over the tables, on his way down the mountain, he violently cast the tablets against the mountain intending to smash them.
4. Scattered - The fury of his anger, the violent way in which he threw the tablets caused them to break into many pieces.
 - a) Instead, Moses’ breaking of the tablets was an important symbolic act done carefully, deliberately, and openly for the benefit of the Israelites because their violation of a covenant is routinely described in the ancient Semitic world as a “breaking” of that “covenant.” In a striking parallel, Zechariah broke a staff he had identified as representing God’s covenant with the nations as a means of demonstrating the breaking of that divinely granted covenant (Zachariah 11:10).^[4]

5. He took the calf – Moses decisively took the calf, with no intention of ever giving it back, so that it was a continuous effort to get it away from them.
6. He burned it and ground it – Moses’s actions demonstrate his intent to completely destroy the idol. This is very symbolic of how powerless the idol was because it was not necessary for God to destroy it. It was necessary for God to destroy Egypt on His own, but it was not necessary for God to destroy the idol on His own.
7. Scattered it over the surface - The people can see the pieces of the idol floating on the water before them. The water defeated Egypt; the idol is nothing on the water.
8. Scattered it over the surface - Moses made them drink it. Bow down to a dead god, who has no power and let that god come out of their bodies as waste.

D. Be Blessed (v. 29):

1. Then Moses said – After the responsible people were held accountable by the Levites Moses continuously verbally sought to communicate a blessing upon God’s people to restore them back to God.
2. Dedicate yourselves to the Lord – To dedicate here means that the Levites need to completely fill themselves with being fully absorbed once again with conducting worship services that are pleasing to the Lord.
3. Dedicate yourselves to the Lord – Worshipping the Lord is only acceptable when we are totally consecrated to Him alone, reverencing Him as the only true God who reigns and is in control of everything no matter how long it may seem it takes for Him to respond (Hebrews 12:28-29).
 - a) The Levites were to prove themselves in a special way as the servants of Jehovah, in anticipation of their formal consecration as ministers of the Sanctuary (cp. Deut. 10:8), by manifesting a self-sacrificing zeal in carrying out the divine command, even upon their nearest relatives.^[5]
4. Bestow; Given you – The only way that Moses can generously activate a blessing to God’s people is if they dedicate themselves to God. Moses would generously put this blessing upon them, but they must decisively turn their worship back to God.
5. Blessings – God blessing of the Levites is an effort for those that are key to serving the

Lord in worship, to regain God's favor. This is essential to the people being able to Worship God in holiness.

6. Bestow – His grace is always sufficient and always availed to us.
7. Blessings – God freely provides us His goodwill, and His favor when we sincerely worship Him with a true heart. It more about our willingness to trust Him even when He seems absent.