

“The Danger in the Delay”

Ex. 32:1-35

Here is the account of the failure of the people while Moses delayed his coming down from the mount. It reminds us of the need to be on our guard against similar failure while we await the Lord’s return.

Background

Moses had been instructed to go up on the mount to receive the tablets of stone containing the Ten Commandments. Before he went up, the people had been given specific instructions as to how they were to worship acceptably while their divinely appointed leader was absent.

1. The Delay (v. 1A)

God arranged for Moses’ delay – it was not accidental, but part of God’s plan. Yet the people strayed in their hearts, lost focus and began to revert to their old ways. This can happen to an individual or to a local body of believers. Luke 24:51-53 gives a clear pattern as to the priorities that characterized the early Church—worship, joy, consistency and praise. As the people waited for their leader’s return so are we to wait for the Son from heaven (1 Thess. 1:10; Titus 2:11; Ex. 12)

2. The Demand (v. 1B)

However, instead of waiting on the Lord, the people began to make demands because they lost sight of God’s program. They began to revert to old ways and habits. (Psalm 85:8) and put the pressure on human leadership to remedy the situation to fill the void.

3. The Departure (vv. 2-6)

Their decline was both morally and spiritually. They instituted man-made ordinances and statutes led by Aaron—of all people! Declaring an unwarranted feast day of the Lord – prefiguring the corruption of both Judaism and Christendom. (John 5.1—Feast of the Jews rather than of Jehovah, Rev. 17-18 – apostate

Christendom as witnessed by the Apostle John who “marveled” at what he saw become of the Church by the end times)

4. The Discipline (vv. 6-35)

The Lord plagued the people because of the graven image of the calf. God withheld His full judgment; however, He did permit the fall of three thousand people that day at the giving of the law – a dramatic contrast to the three thousand who received life at the preaching of the Gospel by Peter on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:41) The response of the Levites (v. 26) paved the way for their privileges of the priesthood during the OT dispensation.

Mark Kolchin

Questions to ask ourselves:

1. Are we keeping our focus while the Lord “delays” His return. It is by God’s design, yet we have a responsibility to walk the pathway of faith during His absence.
2. Are we looking to man to remedy the situation or do we look to the Lord?
3. How in line are we with the pattern of the early disciples while they waited for the return of the Lord?