



[Exodus 32:7-10](#)

(7) And the LORD said to Moses, "Go! Get you down, for your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves*. (8) They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made them a molten calf, and have worshiped it, and have sacrificed to it, and said, 'These *are* your gods, O Israel, who have brought you up out of the land of Egypt.' " (9) And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it *is* a stiffnecked people. (10) And now leave Me alone, so that My wrath may burn hot against them and that I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."

A Faithful Version

These people were undoubtedly sincere, but [God](#) did not care for their sincerity one bit. Why? God saw this as an attempt by these people to control Him through redefining His nature.

When we turn aside from the path, whether we realize it or not, we are beginning to redefine what He is according to our own thinking. If we think this is not a prevalent [sin](#), Jesus says in [Mark 7:7](#), "In vain do you worship Me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." He is not saying that these people are insincere, but that they are failing to follow the way of God. Like these Israelites, they proclaim their religion in the name of God though. Jesus also says in [Luke 6:46](#), "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and do not the things that I say?" That is what they were doing in Exodus 32.

What was their motivation? Does this have an end-time application to the church of God? The answer is in verse 1:

Now when the people saw that [Moses](#) delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

Moses, the charismatic leader, the type of [Jesus Christ](#), delayed his coming! That is alarming! What motivated Saul to make the sacrifice in I Samuel 13? Because Samuel's coming was delayed, Saul presumptuously took it into his own hands to do something he had not been commanded to do—to make the sacrifice. The problem was the delay he perceived.

Do we understand why Christ says, "Do not say in your heart, 'The Lord delays His coming'"? He knows from the experiences from the Old Testament that, if we begin to think that Christ is delaying, then we will turn aside to [idolatry](#) because we will use it as a justification for adjusting ourselves to the spirit of the times we live in. This has alarming ramifications.

What did the Israelites do here? Redefining the nature of God is merely the sin that led to them adjusting their lifestyle, to fall into idolatry. Will that be a problem for this generation? Are we going to think that Christ is delaying His coming?

Sincerity is good, but [truth](#) is needed with it. Jesus says in [John 4:24](#) that God is looking for those who will worship Him in spirit *and* in truth. We need to [examine ourselves](#) to see whether we are making adjustments in our way of life to be in harmony with the spirit of the age. Do we keep [Sabbath](#) just like [the world keeps Sunday](#)? If we do, we have adjusted already. Are we careful in [tithing](#)? Are we concerned God will not come through with prosperity? If so, we are already beginning to make adjustments. Who is the idol? We are.

We change the [image of God](#) by saying, "He won't mind. He understands." He does understand, but He wants us to trust Him. He knows we are under pressure, but He knows we need to learn to do without, to suffer, to wait. Do we believe that?

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:
[Passover and I Corinthians 10](#)



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