

## **MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE**

### ***I. Introduction***

Knowledge of God's will is very important for man in order to have a relationship with God and be saved by God. Therefore God always in any time in human history provided people with the knowledge of His will. Let's look at some examples:

1) Already Adam and Eve had knowledge of God's will in garden of Eden:

Ge 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. {thou shalt surely...: Heb. dying thou shalt die}

God did His part by telling Adam and Eve what not to do and warned them about consequences if they did not obey Him. Adam and Eve had the knowledge. As long as they acted in harmony with it, they had relationship with God. They were His people. Now, satan's tactic was to turn attention of Adam and Eve away from the knowledge of God's will to a different knowledge that was promising them something "better" than what God offered them. However there is only one true knowledge and that is the one from God. Everything else is false.

As soon as Adam and Eve rejected God's true knowledge by eating the forbidden fruit and thus committed sin, God rejected them. They died spiritually for God and God in His love for people immediately started to work on carrying out His plan of salvation for people. Already there in the garden God spoke about the seed of woman that would destroy the power of satan who in form of snake tempted people to reject God's true knowledge.

2) Another example. God with His mighty deeds delivered Israelites from Egyptian captivity. Promised them that they would be unto Him a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation if they kept His covenant. Gave them through Moses 10 commandments and number of other laws as we can read in Exodus 20 and following chapters. God's intention was to give Israelites land of Canaan as He once promised their forefather Abraham. God sent His Messenger who was to keep them and bring them to the place God prepared. God told Israelites to obey the Messenger for in Him is His name and warned them about consequences if they did not obey Him. Then God made covenant with Israelites and appeared to Israelites:

Ex 19:3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.

8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

Ex 23:20 ¶ Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.

21 Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him.

22 But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. {an adversary...: or, I will afflict them that afflict thee}

23 For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off.

Ex 24:4 And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

5 And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD.

6 And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.

8 And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

9 ¶ Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel:

10 And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.

11 And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

BTW, from 1. Corinthians 10 it sounds like the Messenger in whom was God's name and who was to lead Israelites to Canaan was Jesus. It is probably Jesus who Israelites saw after God made covenant with them, for John 6:46 tells us that no man seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

However, let's return back to our subject. Once again God did His part by telling Israelites what not to do and what to do and warned them about consequences if they did not obey Him. Israelites had the knowledge. As long as they acted in harmony with it, they had relationship with God. They were His people. Now, satan's tactic remained the same. It was to turn attention of Israelites away from the knowledge of God's will to a different knowledge that was promising them something "better" than what God offered them. As I said earlier there is only one true knowledge and that is the one from God. Everything else is false.

As soon as Israelites rejected God's true knowledge by making golden calf and worshipped it as god who delivered them from Egypt and thus committed sin, God rejected them. They died not only spiritually for God but 3000 of their men died even physically. Already there God showed how terrible is sin in His eyes and that He would not suffer His holy nation to go punishment for their sins. Already there God showed also His mercy when He did not completely destroy all those who sinned against Him because of Moses' intercession for them. Already there was need of atonement for sins of Israelites. Already there was a need for mediator between God and His people. Already there God stated individual salvation or damnation based on actions of individual people. All these principles permeate God's will in OT and are fully uncovered in NT. They are part of the true knowledge.

3) Often rejection of true knowledge of God's will and its practice in life of God's people is not as blatant as when Israelites made themselves golden calf for their god. But it can come in subtle "innovations". Unlike industry where innovations may be proper and useful for us as customers and for environment, human innovation of God's will are never proper and never useful for any purpose, because they go against God's authority expressed in His will. Do you remember Nadab and Abihu. They were Aaron's sons and had a special position among God's people of Israel as they were serving God as priests.

Ex 28:1 ¶ And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

Le 10:1 ¶ And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.  
2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.  
3 ¶ Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

Nadab and Abihu used wrong means to serve God, means that were not authorised by God and were not part of His will for people and thus part of true knowledge. God by consuming them with fire showed that end does not justify the means.

4) Centuries later in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel when Northern Kingdom of Israel was prosperous God sent His prophet Hosea to announce indictment against His people and upcoming punishment:

Ho 4:1 ¶ Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.  
2 By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. {blood: Heb. bloods}  
3 Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.  
4 Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people are as they that strive with the priest.  
5 Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother. {destroy: Heb. cut off}  
6 ¶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. {destroyed: Heb. cut off}  
7 As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.

God did His part by telling Israelites what not to do and what to do. He also warned them about consequences if they did not obey Him. Israelites had the knowledge. As long as they acted in harmony with it, they had relationship with God. They were His people. But Satan completely turned their attention away from the knowledge of God's will to a different knowledge that was promising them something "better" than what God offered them, i.e. serving to themselves and thus serving Satan.

Israelites rejected God's true knowledge by willful continuous breaching God's will for worshipping Him as the true God as well as willful continuous breaching God's other religious, moral, civil and criminal laws. Therefore God rejected them. They were no longer His people and He would

not longer have mercy upon them. They were spiritually dead for God and in y. 721 there was no more of Northern Kingdom, many Israelites perished, other became slaves and got assimilated with pagan nations far away from the promised land.

## *II. New Testament Time*

OT was nailed to a cross, Jesus rosed from dead and defeated satan. All who obeyed His gospel and abided in His Word participated on Jesus victory over death. They were unto Him a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation if they kept His covenant. Local Christian assemblies were formed to worship God and fulfill particular duties under this new covenant. Christians had knowledge of God's will and there was power of Holy Spirit actively working to establish truthfulness of Christian religion in the world in 1 century AD.

God did His part by telling Christians what to do and what not to do, warned them about consequences if they did not obey Him. Christians had the knowledge. As long as they acted in harmony with it, they had relationship with God. They were His people. However their adversary the devil was still there prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. - Anyone who is not sober and watchful (1Pe 5:8) and let satan to turn their attention from the knowledge of God's will to a different knowledge that was promising them something "better" then what God offered them. Did Jesus promised persecution to His followers? Satan could offer life free of persecution to those who would worship him, freedom to do whatever sin they wish and many other things that please people in this world.

The covenant changed but people remained the same. Already in the beginning of Christianity there were those of Jewish Christians who tried to innovate God's will by teaching that gentiles must be circumcised and keep Moses law to be acceptable for God. And although in Acts 15 we read that this problem was resolved by decision of Holy Spirit against this human innovation, these judaizing brethren were still so influential that they caused other Christians of Jewish origin to act hypocritically toward their gentiles fellow Christians and among them was even apostle Peter who was given truth and power from Holy Spirit.

Ga 2:11 ¶ But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

12 For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.

13 And with him the rest of the Jews acted insincerely, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity.

14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

If apostle Peter could make a wrong decision and had to be corrected to be sober and watchful to guard himself against satan then this would apply even more to other Christians who were not apostles, Holy Spirit never spoke through them and they never made any miracles.

The fact is that quite a few Christians lost their battle with satan, allowed satan to turn them away from true knowledge to some falsehood for we read in NT of churches that were dead or almost dead.

Re 3:1 ¶ "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. "'I know your works; you have the name of being alive, and you are dead.

Re 3:14 ¶ "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.

15 "'I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot!

16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth.

17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

18 Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may be rich, and white garments to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see.

19 Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent.

There was time when Christians in church in Sardis and church in Laodicea were saved by God from their sins. So what happened that they ended like this? Could it be innovations of God's will that some people brought in church? These human innovations would turn Christians from true knowledge of God's will to false knowledge, which gave them false sense of security and relationship with God. The fact is that they rejected God and God was about to reject them.

From modern history we know about innovations that were brought into churches of God's people such as instrumental music. In mid 1800's Christian churches in USA divided due to innovations such as instrumental music. In 1940's Christian churches in USA divided again due to innovations regarding institutional ideas e.g. orphan homes. Instrumental music and other innovations were brought to churches as means to help with specific work of church. By means I mean method how to do specific thing. For instance instrumental music was means how to help with singing and worship. Such means brought into church are nothing else but human innovations that turn minds of Christians away from God's true knowledge, that is from Scriptural way how to do certain work required by God to a different knowledge.

### ***III. Conclusion***

What is the lesson for us? We need to be careful to learn from NT churches and even God's people in modern history. We need to be careful that we teach and practice things for which we have authority in God's word. That applies also to the means (i.e. methods how to do things) that we use to serve God. It is not our place to figure out how to do some work. God already decided it in His Word.

We need to ask ourselves if there is an authority in God's Word for what we would like to do in our service to God and how we would like to do it. That applies to our worship assemblies as much as to other assemblies of our church. That of course applies also to us as individual Christians.

End does not justify any means in God's sight. Even subtle innovations of God's will go against true knowledge of God's will, turn away the minds of Christians from true knowledge and practice of God's will. This opens the door for other innovations and in the course of time will amount to big changes in the Lord's Church. God expects us to be same tomorrow as we are today. Let's focus on what is written in Scriptures so that we and our children and their children will not be destroyed for lack of knowledge.

