

Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

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Knowing God

How easy it is to forget that which we once knew! Yahweh clearly told Israel that they must not make images to which to bow:

- 2 I *am* Yahweh your God, which has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
- 3 You shall have no other gods before me.
- 4 You shall not make to you any graven image, or any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth: -Exodus 20

Even so, Aaron produced the golden image of a calf, claiming that it represented the gods that brought Israel out of Egypt:

- 3 And all the people broke off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* to Aaron.
- 4 And he received *them* from their hands, and fashioned it with an engraving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These *are* your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt. -Exodus 32

Adding to the confusion, Aaron proclaimed a “feast to Yahweh” as part of the celebration that centered around the image of the calf:

- 5 And when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow *is* a feast to Yahweh.
- 6 And they rose up early on the next day, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. -Exodus 32

Although they mentioned Yahweh, the creation of the image and the altar showed that they had actually forgotten Him:

- 19 They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.
- 20 Thus they changed their glory into the likeness of an ox that eats grass.
- 21 They forgot God their savior, which had done great things in Egypt;
- 22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham, *and* awesome things by the Red Sea. -Psalms 106

The creation of altars for the worship of images is an act of rebellion against Yahweh and His word. Even King Solomon, for example, rebelled after he had finished building the temple for Yahweh. He created altars for worshipping the images of the gods of his foreign wives:

- 6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of Yahweh, and went not fully after Yahweh, as *did* David his father.
 - 7 Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that *is* before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.
 - 8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed to their gods. -1 Kings 11
- Solomon professed to know and love Yahweh. However, his acts of rebellion against His commandment demonstrated that he had forgotten Him. Because Solomon refused to obey Yahweh, the united kingdom of Israel was divided. The northern part was called “Israel” and the southern part was called “Judah.”

The king of the new “Israel” quickly returned the people back to worshipping the images of golden calves:

- 28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said to them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.
- 29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.
- 30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to *worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan. -1 Kings 12

Even though the people of Israel continued in idolatry, they thought they knew God. As Yahweh was poised to bring judgement upon them because they had “transgressed” His covenant and “trespassed” against His law, they cried out to Him, “My God, we know you!”

- 1 *Set* the trumpet to your mouth. *He shall come* as an eagle against the house of Yahweh, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law.
- 2 Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know you. -Hosea 8

However, if those who claim to know Yahweh really know Him, they will listen to Him and try to obey Him:

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

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- 22 For I spoke not to your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices:
- 23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people: and walk you in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. -Jeremiah 7

Those who don't know Him, however, think that ritualistic sacrifices, made to images on temple altars, will somehow save them. Yahweh cautions that praying to images cannot save them:

- 20 Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, you *that are* escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray to a god *that* cannot save. -Isaiah 45

Instead of listening to Yahweh and obeying Him, Israel cast Him off and set up their own kings and made their own idols for worship:

- 3 Israel has cast off *the thing that is* good: the enemy shall pursue him.
- 4 They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew *it* not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off. -Hosea 8

They even continued to worship the images of golden calves. For their rebellious sin in Samaria, the capital city of the northern kingdom, their destruction was imminent:

- 5 Your calf, O Samaria, has cast *you* off; my anger is kindled against them: how long *will it be* before they attain to innocence?
- 6 For from Israel *was* it also: the workman made it; therefore it *is* not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces. -Hosea 8

They had worked hard at their religion. However, all that they had done was worthless. Their religious practices were like sowing seeds in the wind. No matter how sincere they were, their efforts would not bear fruit:

- 7 For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it has no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up. -Hosea 8

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There was no shortage of altars in the northern kingdom of Israel, which was also called Ephraim. Unfortunately, because the Word of God was like some "strange thing" to them, their altars were actually places to sin:

- 11 Because Ephraim has made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin.
- 12 I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing. -Hosea 8

Without knowing Yahweh, Israel continued to build temples and Judah built fortified cities. Despite their efforts, however, judgment was on the way:

- 14 For Israel has forgotten his Maker, and builds temples; and Judah has multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof. -Hosea 8

Even the temple in Jerusalem, which had been dedicated to the name of Yahweh, had become polluted with images and false worship. King Mannaseh, for example, had boldly built altars to other gods and goddesses there:

- 4 And he built altars in the house of Yahweh, of which Yahweh said, In Jerusalem will I put my name.
- 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of Yahweh. -2 Kings 21

While the corrupted temple was an appealing place for people to worship, Yahweh cautioned:

- 4 Trust you not in lying words, saying, The temple of Yahweh, The temple of Yahweh, The temple of Yahweh, *are* these. -Jeremiah 7

Even though the people were trying to please God by offering ritualistic sacrifices in the temple, Yahweh said that it was more important for them to know Him:

- 6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. -Hosea 6
- Yahweh said that His people who lack knowledge are destroyed!

- 6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you, that you shall be no priest to me: seeing you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your children. -Hosea 4

Paul explains, without knowledge His people zealously try to demonstrate their own righteousness, instead of relying on the righteousness of God:

- 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.
- 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. -Romans 10

As Yahshua (also called Jesus) prayed as a man, He said:

- 3 And this is life eternal, that they might know you the only true God, and Yahshua the Messiah, whom you have sent. -John 17

Yahweh reveals Himself to us through His Word, which is the promise of eternal life to those who know Him.