

Being God's People

God has a plan to live with His people in the kingdom. In order to be part of this, we need to be His people. What does it mean to be part of God's people?

God took His people out of Egypt. In Egypt they followed Egyptian laws and served Pharaoh. They were Egyptians. This was not how God wanted His people to live. They had to be different.

God wanted His people to follow His own laws not Egyptian. His laws were right and just. They ensured the worship of the one true God. If they followed God's laws, then they were God's people. God's people follow God's laws. They do this because God is their God.

We are God's people if we follow His commands given through Jesus. We are Christians if we follow the commands of Christ; *"You are my friends if you do what I command"* (John 15:14).

In the wilderness journey, many people decided not to follow God's commands. This was not inadvertent sinning. This was full scale rebellion. They choose not to follow God. Those who made the golden calf had just been told to not have idols. Others decided they did not want to follow God to the Promised Land and wanted to return to Egypt. Others mixed themselves with the nations at Baal Peor and worshipped idols.

There is nothing that God can do for rebels. These people have made a choice to not follow God's ways; *"the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so"* (Rom 8:7). Rebels cannot be God's people.

God's kingdom cannot have rebels in it. God will not grant eternal life to someone who continues to break His commands. A rebel does not submit to the laws of the land and lives in defiance of its leaders. These people would spoil the kingdom for God and for everyone else.

But we are not like that. We do make mistakes and we do sin. But we are not rebels. We have not made a deliberate decision to turn away from God's commands. We are trying to follow God's laws. We do submit to the wishes of our leaders; *"Submit yourselves, then, to God"* (Jam 4:7). We are God's people.

Let us not confuse the occasional unintended failure of a believer with the way of life of the rebel. These are very different things. One person submits to God's commands, the other does not. One person lives as though Christ is his Lord, the other does not. One person fears God, the other does not.

The Law of Moses was clear about the difference between rebels and occasional unintended failures. The Tabernacle, the feasts and sacrifices were made so that the occasional unintended failures could be forgiven. But rebels were destroyed.

God's people are those who submit to God and His laws. That is what they do. They make a genuine attempt to live by them. They really do listen to their Lord Jesus and follow him. It is these people who will be in God's kingdom; *"you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light"* (1 Pet 2:9).

We are God's people, because we submit to God's will just as Jesus did. Jesus submitted his life in obedience to God and so should we. As we are commanded, let us remember Jesus in the bread and the wine.