

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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Some New Thing

It is tempting for us to try to think of some new and creative way to worship God. However, there is really nothing that is new. Instead, that which we think is some new thing is just another twist to something that has already been, even though it may have long been forgotten:

- 9 The thing that has been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is* that which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun.
- 10 Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? it has been already of old time, which was before us.
- 11 *There is* no remembrance of former *things*; neither shall there be *any* remembrance of *things* that are to come with *those* that shall come after. -Ecclesiastes 1

Even innocent innovations that begin with the most noble intentions can soon distract us away from Yahweh and become abominations to Him. After Yahweh showed His power by using Gideon to miraculously conquer the oppressing Midianites, Gideon humbly rejected the call of the people to make him their ruler:

- 22 Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, Rule you over us, both you, and your son, and your son's son also: for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.
- 23 And Gideon said to them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: Yahweh shall rule over you. -Judges 8

Instead, he took the spoils of the battle and made a golden priestly garment, called an ephod. Soon, that ephod became a "snare" to Gideon and his people:

- 24 And Gideon said to them, I would desire a request of you, that you would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they *were* Ishmaelites.)
- 25 And they answered, We will willingly give *them*. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey.
- 26 And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred *shekels* of gold; besides ornaments, and collars, and purple robes that *were* on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that *were* about their camels' necks.
- 27 And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, *even* in Ophrah: and all Israel went there

a whoring after it: which thing became a snare to Gideon, and to his house. -Judges 8

The undue reverence that the people gave to the golden ephod prepared their hearts for idolatry. As soon as Gideon died, Israel turned their backs on Yahweh and returned to worshipping the images of "baalim," meaning "lords." Rejecting Yahweh, they openly embraced the "Baalberith," which was known as the "lord of the covenant:"

- 33 And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baalberith their god.
- 34 And the children of Israel remembered not Yahweh their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: -Judges 8

The love and honor that the people of Israel gave to the golden ephod helped to condition them for the worship of Baalberith! The first step to going back into the old system of idolatry, from which Yahweh used Gideon to deliver them, was the development of the "new thing," which was the golden ephod. It provided a crack in their devotion to Yahweh through which they soon entered to return back to Baal worship.

Satan's work is subtle. He tries to cast a little doubt upon the validity of God's Word as the first step to our open rebellion against Yahweh. This was how the Serpent (Satan) operated in the garden with Eve. He asked her, in effect, "did God really say that?"

- 1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Yahweh God had made. And he said to the woman, Indeed, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden? -Genesis 3

Likewise, when Gideon made the greatly revered golden ephod, he must have somehow thought that God didn't really mean what He said concerning making such images:

- 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:
- 5 You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I Yahweh your God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; -Exodus 20

**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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In case we failed to comprehend Yahweh's commandment concerning images, He repeated it over and over again in His Word, as He did here through Moses:

- 15 Take you therefore good heed unto yourselves; for you saw no manner of likeness on the day *that* Yahweh spoke unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire:
- 16 Lest you corrupt *yourselves*, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female,
- 17 The likeness of any beast that *is* on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flies in the air,
- 18 The likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that *is* in the waters beneath the earth:
- 19 And lest you lift up your eyes unto heaven, and when you see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, *even* all the host of heaven, should be driven to worship them, and serve them, which Yahweh your God has divided to all nations under the whole heaven. -Deuteronomy 4

Yahweh warned Israel:

- 23 Take heed unto yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of Yahweh your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, *or* the likeness of any *thing*, which Yahweh your God has forbidden you. -Deuteronomy 4

Notwithstanding Yahweh's clear instructions concerning images, there has been a continuous temptation to somehow legitimize certain kinds of images as being exceptions to this Word. This is especially the case with those images that are believed to somehow glorify Yahweh.

This was illustrated by Micah, the Ephraimite, and his mother. After Micah returned the silver that he had stolen from his mother, she blessed him and told him that she had dedicated the silver to Yahweh for the purpose of making images:

- 2 And he said to his mother, The eleven hundred *shekels* of silver that were taken from you, about which you cursed, and spoke of also in my ears, behold, the silver *is* with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed *be you* of Yahweh, my son.
- 3 And when he had restored the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly

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dedicated the silver unto Yahweh from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it to you. -Judges 17

She returned a portion of the silver to Micah, which he used to make additional images for his collection of gods. Failing to consult the Word of Yahweh, he did that which he thought was right. He set up his own new religion based on images and even installed his own son as his priest:

- 4 Yet he restored the money to his mother; and his mother took two hundred *shekels* of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah.
- 5 And the man Micah had a house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.
- 6 In those days *there was* no king in Israel, *but every man did that which was* right in his own eyes. -Judges 17

As we try to do that which is right in our own eyes, we can easily look for some "new thing," such as another god to worship. This was precisely what the people at Mars Hill in Athens were doing:

- 21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)
- 22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, *You men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious.* -Acts 17

Paul called the men of Athens "too superstitious," meaning that they were too religious in that they were prone to the worship of gods and goddesses. They were always looking for something new to worship. God tells us that the people of the earth will be deceived by a miracle worker who tells them to make an image for worship:

- 14 And deceives them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. -Revelation 13

Those who will not worship the image will be required to do so under penalty of death:

- 15 And he had power to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. -Revelation 13

John gives clear instructions concerning such idols:

- 20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Yahshua the Messiah. This is the true God, and eternal life.
- 21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. -1 John 5

Before we yield to the temptation of seeking after "some new thing" to worship, we should remember that there is really nothing that is new. Therefore, we had better be certain that it is in agreement with the Word of God.