

Failing to serve. & A Servant promised.

Serving God

Foundation

Bible passage : 1 Thess 1:9

In Unit 1 we saw that God commanded people “*You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image... You shall not bow down to them or serve them,*” (From Exodus 20.3-6)

God warned people many times that if they ignored what He told them things would go badly. Yet within a few hours of the command being given the people ignored it, made a golden calf, and worshipped that. We see in the Old Testament how in the years that followed they kept falling tin to the same thing, worshipping statues and idols. Things continued to go badly as God said they would.

God is the maker of all, following His instructions is good for the whole world and things go badly when we do not.

For the people of Israel, when they ignored God He visited iniquity on them (Ex 20.5). The end result was that everything was torn away from them. Many, many, people died. But some, like Daniel and his friends ended up in Babylon. There, they were surrounded by statues and idols, but refused to break God’s command, and had to face the Lion’s Den and Fiery Furnace as a result.

The people learned the lesson and by the time of Jesus the Jews were well known because they would not worship idols in the way other people did.

But, the command was not just about that. It was really about serving God from the heart. God had warned them about that too, and so did Jesus.

As a result of Jesus coming the message about Him began to spread. Soon most of those who

Isaiah by (Jean-Louis-) Ernest Meissonie 1838 (The Wallace Collection)



heard the message were not Jews. But, worshipping idols was part of their religion, in places like Athens there were statues and the like on every corner.

When people heard about Jesus they believed

“they turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” (1Thess 1.9)

and trusted in Him and as a result -

How was that possible? What made the difference? The answer to that is in the Old Testament too. God spoke through the prophets and especially through Isaiah. The Lord God, who commanded people to worship Him alone, promised that someone would come who :

shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted and Kings will shut their mouths because of Him. (Isaiah 52.13)

Yet, the Lord describes Him as “my Servant”. How could a servant be exalted and lifted up, without breaking the command to worship God alone.

We will see in unit 4.



When people did not serve God alone things went badly. But, He promised to send “My servant”