

The Tragedy of Third Generation Religion

By Paris Reidhead*

Will you turn please to Judges chapter 2, one of the most prophetic chapters in the entire Old Testament. I'd like to read several verses, at least down to the thirteenth verse in the second chapter of the book of Judges. May I remind us that what we find here is for our instruction, these things are written to be examples for our warning, of our teaching, for our encouragement. So find yourself in this portion. Do not allow the historical facts to cloud the personal application.

“And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.² And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?³ Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.⁴ And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept.⁵ And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the Lord.⁶ And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land.⁷ And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel.⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old.⁹ And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash.¹⁰ And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.¹¹ And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim:¹² And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger.¹³ And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.¹⁴ And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.¹⁵ Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.”

The Tragedy of Third Generation Religion. Joshua out lived a generation that had escaped Egypt, refused to be to God the vehicle of blessing that He had intended. You remember that God said to Abraham who was residing in Ur of the Chaldees, an idolatrous nation. “Get thee up from thy kindred, from thy father’s house and I will make of thee a great nation.” (Gen. 12:1,2)

God wanted to do a new thing. He wanted a witness. He wanted a testimony. And that witness and testimony began with a man. A man who dared to believe Him. A man who dared to obey Him. A man who counted it all that he possessed, all that he had achieved and all that he acquired as being of no value, in terms of that which God held before him as a prospect of his service for the Lord God. We see Abraham as he journeyed from Ur of the Chaldees out into that unknown future, walking by faith, becoming thus the father of the faithful. That new thing began with a baby. A baby that had been named years before his birth, a baby that had been promised, a baby, in which, the whole hope of Abraham and all the purpose of Jehovah rested.

You’ll recall that at the age of 17, God said to Abram, “Take your son and bring him up to the mount that I’ll show you and sacrifice him there.” You remember that Abram had resurrection faith. The servant said to him, “Where will you get the offering?” He said, “The Lord will provide.” And then he turned to the servant and said, “We will come again.” He knew what was expected of him. He bound his son hand and foot and asked him to lie down upon that altar that he had made. And I can see him as he looks down at bounded Isaac and said son, “Be not afraid. God gave you to your mother and to me when we were as good as died. It is not harder for Him to raise you from the died after you’ve been slain and burned, than it was for Him to give you to us in the first place and so relax son. God has said, ‘That in Isaac My seed shall be called.’ (Gen. 17:19) And so I must.” And the young man said, “It’s well, father.” And he looks at his father with piety that only you can imagine. Raises that right hand let the knife descend and he consents to it, because his father believed God. And he had said to the servant, “We will come again.”

You'll understand then it was through death and resurrection of the promised son that God would acquire His nation that would be His witness. We see Israel that is the children of Jacob as they go down into Egypt. Abide there some 400 years and the time comes when God is going to draw out of the womb where He's been forming this nation that people that which shall be a witness for Him. He does it by first causing them to lose confidence in the gods of Egypt. They've labored in Egypt. They had been slaves in Egypt. They've had no testimony of Himself. And so there is a contest between Moses and the Egyptians and in that contest, God proved His power is superior to all of the ten major gods of Egypt, and leads them by His right arm and great hand of power out across the Red Sea into the wilderness.

You would say, that a people so marvelously delivered would be prepared to go anywhere with God, would you not? But when they came up to Kadesh-Barnea and saw there giants in the land, even though the land filled with milk and honey, they draw back and refused to follow the Lord. They, in other words, would rather preserve their own skin than give God the vehicle of blessing and witness that He asked for. And the consequence was that that generation was doomed to have no part with God in the new thing He was then doing. And Joshua was the one with Caleb who stood the elders of Israel. He and Caleb were the only two that survived of that generation and were prepared to go across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land.

Now, listen to the text and again, "They served the Lord all the days of Joshua. They served the Lord all the days of the elders that had served with and had outlived Joshua." That would be that company of people forty years younger than him that had gone across the Jordan River. What was God's purpose in this people? He wanted a people that would cling to Him, that would love Him, that would obey Him, that would service Him, that would do that which He prescribed for them. In order that in this people, Israel, He could have His witness to the nations around about.

Now remember He said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me." (Acts 1:8) even there through Abraham was that promise that "in thee and thy seed shall all the nations of the earth." (Gen. 17:7) Of course, in Abraham's mind were the nations that then existed, even as we would apply that promise to the nations that are alive today. Understand then that God's purpose in Israel would be to have "a peculiar people, a chosen generation, a royal priest that shew forth His praises," by means of whom He could have a testimony to these that groveled before heathen idols. (I Pet. 2:9) For even though they were wicked, were idolatrous, were immortal, were cruel, He loved them even as He loved you, when we were equally vile. And God therefore wanted Israel to be His sermon in society. He wanted the way people dressed, the food they ate, the kind of homes in which they lived, the matter in which they tilled their fields, as well as their worship on the Sabbath all to be a testimony to His Holiness to His wisdom, to His righteousness, to His justice, to His mercy, His grace and His love. And so He has this people as His witness.

Now, what was the religions in the land? There were three. And I think it will help you to understand the message of the evening and the burden of my heart if I give you a little background of the development of these three major religious systems. First is the worship of Baal. Pardon me, the first is the worship of Ashtoreth. I think the first organized religious system in human history is this that is called here at this time the worship of Ashtoreth. If you read carefully the book of Genesis you'll discover the portion that says, "And Nimrod was a mighty hunter before the Lord." (Gen. 10:9) But the word translated 'hunter' actually means 'spearman', or in this case means 'rebel'. It pictures a man by the name of Nimrod that had usually leadership qualities and abilities, who succeeded in organizing the people of his generation in open revolt against God as they had known Him through the testimony conveyed by Noah. We would therefore conclude that the Tower of Babel was actually a temple that was erected for the worship as Hislop¹ tells us in his volume, "The Two Babylons", erected for the worship of Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod's father, not his own mother. Never the less this was an incestuous relationship. It was apparently Satan's time to fulfill his promise to Eve. You remember he had said to her, "Ye shall be as God." (Gen. 3:5) And at this time we find the introduction of that form of worship which was the deification of woman and of sex.

Now, the worship of Semiramis and Tower of Babel came to a sudden halt when God confused the languages of the people and broke down the temple or the tower, but it did not exterminate the worship of woman. What we find very shortly

¹ Alexander Hislop (1807-1865) was a Free Church of Scotland minister known for his criticisms of the Roman Catholic Church.

thereafter in the archaeological records the raising of this word Ashtoreth, Astarte in one of its forms and it is always associated with the worship of the female. This then is the first form of organized religious rebellion against God. It was for a twofold purpose, first to insure progeny, because in the agricultural economy of the day it was necessary to have a large family if one were to prosper in tilling of the soil. And it was secondly to give a license for immortality. A religious license that would satisfy and quiet the disturbances of the conscience and so the worship of Ashtoreth was for this two fold purpose to ensure children and to also to give a license to unbridle lust.

Now the second form of idolatry is that of the worship of Baal. This is an ancient Semitic word, Baal. It does not refer to any particular individual, but the word itself means 'owner'. I believe it refers to the evil spirit that was associated with a particular geographical area in which people resided or worked. Apparently, there was an evil spirit for each community. We find such words such as Baal-Kurjaz and Baal-Peor. The owner of Kurjaz. The owner of Peor. Not referring to a particular personality, but the local evil spirit, evil personality that must be placated if there was to be prosperity in that area. For instance, every town had its Baal. There would be an alter some degree of similar between them, but not enough to insure that they had reference to the same personality at all, but this was the place to which with the owner of the place, namely that evil spirit had to be served, had to be worshiped, had to be placated. Now every farmer would have a little alter dedicated to the Baal of the area before he planted his field. He would take whatever offering was prescribed and kill it, sprinkle the blood in order to satisfy the owner so as to ensure a good crop.

Now remember the worship of Astarte had to do with a license for immorality and the worship of Baal had to do with the procuring of things or to ensure prosperity. Now we'll move on to the third type of idolatry of the period which was the worship of Moloch. The word Moloch has the Semitic radicals that you'll find in the present Arabic word 'melik'. When we were first in Africa we landed in Port Side in Egypt, went to Cairo and were there on the day of the opening of Parliament visiting the American University when, the then king of Egypt Farouk rode by in a beautiful state coach drawn by the magnificent Arabian horses and as he passed so near to the fence inside of which we were standing. We could hear the throngs on every side crying out, "Malik Eazim!" "Great King!"

Well, these are the radials M, L, K that are found in word Moloch and thus it has reference to 'king'. Now here again we have certain archaeological remains that have been discovered that enable us to picture the general expression, the usually form of Moloch as being a majestic figure of king usually in a seated position. With his hands folded on his knees in such a way that arms and legs and folded hands would make a basin. Many times they would find an air tunnel, back from the rear of the statue which would enable air to be forced through so as to cause the grating that was over the hole that held the charcoal to produce a fire of tremendously intense heat. Thus the worshiper would come usually the father often the father and the mother would come with their child if possible the first born son though it's recorded that sometimes they would bring a daughter and call it a son for Moloch was too able to see. He was a little near sighted. At any rate they were desires of having the end for which they make the sacrifice and anything would do in their need. And so the parents would come with their child and though there must have been some measure of parental love nevertheless the vanity and the ambition and the desire in the hearts of the people was sufficient that they were willing take their children and make the child pass through the fire. Can you see a father now moved with desire for honor, for position, for authority over his fellows? For this was the reason for the worship of Moloch to achieve ascendancy over ones fellows. And so he would stand there look into the face of his little first born son, shall we say, and with whatever feelings a father should have, his ambitious so much greater than his nature affection, that he would then petition the spirit represented by the statue and calculating the degree of force necessary to project the little flailing armed infant into the very center of the fire. The father would calculate the odds and then as carefully as he could throw the child up so it would land directly in the middle intense flames and fire. And thus the child would be given as an offering to Moloch and the reason being that the beloved of the father sacrificed would ensure that the father would secure the honor and the position for which his insatiable lustful heart craved. After all, there is only so much sexual experience and immoral experience that one can have. Only so many things one can acquire and after that then what is there left.

Well we find a parallel to these three. John writing in his first Epistle in the second chapter tells us that we are to, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." (I John 2:15) And then he uses a strange statement "For all, all, all that is in the

world,” and he has emphasized that ‘all’. Satan has only three tools in his kit, three weapons in his arsenal. (I John 2:16) And yet with those three weapons he has damned the race of men. There’s only three. The first is the lust of the eyes, things, things that soon break, things that soon rust, things that soon go out of fashion, things that soon pass away and you have to pay to have then dumped or carried off somewhere. The only things that the god of this world can give are one of the three things he can give to men in exchange for their souls is things. This we call the lust of the eyes—the worship of Baal.

Then the second thing that he can give is experience, illicit experience, illegal experience, forbidden experience, experience outside the will of God. And so he has said to Eve and to all the daughters and sons of Eve across the centuries, “It is worth your soul to be free to have a sensual experience as you yourself choose.” And can you imagine therefore the success of Satan in destroying a numbered millions of men and women simply by offering them sensual experience, glandular experience, but this is what John said, “All that is in the world is the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh.”

And then the third thing that he tells about is the associated with Moloch, the third thing that he has in his arsenal the third weapon, the third tool in his kit is the pride of life. Mainly, position of authority ascendancy over ones fellows. And so by the clever inter mingling of these three things, by the glamorizing of these three things, by the intensifying of the attraction of these three things, Satan is succeeding is damned generation after generation. And this all he has! Absolutely all that he has to work with! “The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.” Associated in our minds with the worship of Ashtoreth—the lust of the flesh, the worship of Baal—the lust of the eyes, and the worship of Moloch—the pride of life.

Now, God made us for Himself. This is the primary principle of this book and in making us for Himself He gave us a unique combination of appetites and urges. You have possessed them. You came into the world with them. God made us finite spirits; because we were finite we can exist in one place in contrast with His infinity for He is every place equally. We are in one place only. And so God gave us bodies that could be vehicles or houses for our spirit and we could abide in that one place. Now joining spirit and soul to body He gave us an appetite for food because He intended these bodies to be nourished. He gave us taste buds, olfactory nerves, and eyes of distinguished color in order that we might have a certain degree of pleasure in what we see, and what we smell, and what we taste. God not only gave us an appetite for food that there should be an inner urge that would drive us to replenish our bodies and keep them nourished, but He gave an abundance of means of satisfying this appetite properly, legitimately in good way. And with this abundance of supply He gave a variety of odors, a variety of taste so that there should be pleasure in the eating. God likewise wanted to complete this family of His by means of natural reproduction, so He gave to man reproductive abilities, but reproductive urge. The sexual urge was given of God. It was given to the first pair and God pronounced it good. There is nothing wrong with sex. There is nothing wrong with it. God made us and God gave the proper legitimately way by which this and every need was to be satisfied. God gave to us an appetite for knowledge. For we were finite and we learned in sequence. God is omniscient He knows everything simultaneously. We have to learn, so God gave us an inner urge, an inner pressure, an inner hunger, an incentive to learn. And this you are now experiencing many of you as students. You’re learning, you’re studying. You have a desire to explore and learn more and further and this is good.

One of the tragedies of our existence is this that our brains are so much greater than our body’s ability to sustain them. The wisest man that’s ever lived has only used 3% of his brain power and most of us limp along on about 9/10th of 1% up to about 1.6%. This is the average. So here are our brains with the unlimited capacity. Do you realize that the human brain has been liken to an electronic brain? Someone said and I don’t know whether he is right or not, but he said, if the human brain were put together on the basis of an IBM electronic brain, it would take 7 buildings the size of the Empire State Building to house it, it would take all the water of the Niagara River to cool it, and all of the power generated by the Niagara River to operate it. The human brain is a magnificently integrate thing. God has established it with apparently intending us to go on indefinitely, but here we reach the age of 60 or 70 and then the body begins to become frail our form fades and soon the great potential in every human personality is stopped by death.

And so it was that God gave to us brains and the capacity to learn and He put with that an incentive to learn. In addition to that, God gave to us an appetite for pleasure that we might enjoy what He’s created. He gave to us with that an appetite for security in order that His providence might be appreciated by it. In other words, all the urges and all the drives that God put

into human personality were for a purpose. And when we looked at the first pair with these appetites and urges He said, "It is good."

Now remember there's been a heresy for some centuries. It began about the time of Plato and it continued on down across the centuries to the time of the Gnostics and it was a satanic counterfeit. It was stopped by Paul in the book of the Colossians. But there at the time of Plato the idea was promulgated and widely accepted that all matter is bad. And then gradually Gnosticism grew up which said that God created only spirit and Satan created matter. And that the fall of man forcing him to take on a physically body. And of course this greatly influenced Augustine for he'd been a Manichaeistic which was a successor to the Gnostics. And so into the Christian faith came back there in the 3rd or 4th century the idea that the body is bad and the appetites and the urges are bad, but this is not a Scriptural teaching. We are told the only thing that we have that He asked for is our bodies. We are to "present them a living sacrifice holy, acceptable unto God," (Rom. 12:1)

Now the body then was the tabernacle of the human spirit and it was here that God would meet with man, here we would dwell. And through this we would have contact with the world that God had made. Now I want you see what's happened, here is the man as a triangle, as a pyramid better, resting upon its apex. The body touching the earth, then the soul, and the spirit, but you see God made us not to find our fulfillment in the world, simply our sustenance, but not our fulfillment. And so the pyramid rests on its apex. Resting on the earth indeed, nourished by it, sustained by it, walking on it, governing it, but all of the powers of the body and the soul and the spirit were plastered toward heaven and aimed toward God. For with these appetites and urges God created in man an empty place that only God can fill. Now this is the unique thing about human personality.

If you'll read the book of Ecclesiastes, with this in view, you'll find that one man has done what everyone one of us at some point in our pilgrimage would like to do to try everything that is designed in any way to satisfy human personality. And when Solomon has gotten everything that wealth could bring the lust of the eye and the accumulation of buildings and possessions has gone to a degree. No one else has been able to achieve when he has acquired the pride of life to the place where he is the king of all kings and the whole world pays tribute to him. And when he has gone into the experience of the lust of flesh until he has 1000 wives and concubines and he says there is nothing anyone has ever did that he didn't try, nothing that his eye saw that he didn't take. When this man has done everything is possible for human personality to do to try and satisfy himself the matter in which man were being led by the god of this world to satisfy themselves, he gave an answer with greater authority than anyone else has ever been able to give. And the answer was this, soul are you satisfied now that you have things beyond any other, soul are you satisfied now that you have position beyond any other, soul are you satisfied now that you have sensual experience beyond any other, and the answer that came from the empty chamber of his spirit was this, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." (Ecc. 12:8) Emptiness! In other words, Solomon said they that which the god of this world offers: the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life can't meet the need of a man, because man was made for God.

Though Augustine was influence by Manichaeism, there came a time when he spoke wisely and well and we hear it today and it feeds our hearts today because of its undying truth as we hear him as he had gone to every cesspool pit in his world to try and drink as deeply as he could, as deeply as time and strength allowed. And finally by futility and frustration and by the prayers of his mother Monica was pressed into the waiting arms of the Lord Jesus Christ. He then spoke and we hear that and He said, "Oh Lord, Thou has so made us that we cannot rest until we rest in Thee."

My dear we are made for God. Nothing can satisfy us, but God. And that's why God got Himself a people and He came down in the midst of that people and He dwelt beneath the wings of the Cherubim. He was there under the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire so that He could be in the midst of His people. That He could have a people that would know Him. A people that would understand Him. A people that would love Him. A people that would serve Him, that they could be witnesses for they needed God.

What do we find? We find the third generation. God's witness, God's testimony was obliterated God. And the saddest words in the Old Testament occur in the 13th verse, the 2nd chapter of Judges, "And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtoreth." They went back to the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh.

How did it happen? Did they abandoned the tabernacle? Did they abandon the church? Did they say tear down that tent? Oh no, they didn't do that. You know what they did? He came over and said, "You know wife, today, when I was out in that field, we haven't had a very good crop since we've been here. Father had a better crop. You know one of the men that use to farm this land before Joshua took it over came by. He said, 'This was his field. You know he is still living there in town.'" "Yeah." "He asked me how many bushels an acre I was getting. I told him and he said, 'Oh, he had much better when he was here.' What'd you do that we're not doing it? 'Well, you see those stones over there that have fallen down? When we had it those stones were built up.' What do you mean? We wondered what those stones were for. They have funny splotches all over them. 'Funny splotches that's the alter to Baal. Didn't you know there's an evil spirit that controls this farm? And didn't you know that unless he is pleased your crops won't grow, you won't get rain, bugs will eat it.' Is that so?" He said, "You know it's been so long since we've had anything more than just scribble on long." "What did he say they did?" "Well, take a lamb and kill it and sprinkle the blood on those stones." "You know dear I wouldn't want anyone to find out about it. But if you could sort of just accidentally kill a lamb when you got near those stones and then pick up there so that you're trying to tend it. Nobody would know. And the Baal might be, might be pleased. I don't want anyone down at the Tabernacle to find out about it. And so we won't make a break, we'll go down and do everything we've done. We've just got to get a good crop." "Ah, I don't know." "Well, Joshua is died all those fellows with they're gone. After all God isn't as real to us as He was to them. We just got to get a good crop. How are we going...look at my blanket is just worn out. And just look at those pans over there and the clay pots. Every pot we've got is broken. It has been so long since I've had any new clothes. And those fellows in town, you know they've got some wonderful things. Every time I go to the market I just come home, I'm all torn up inside. We just don't have enough." "Well, I don't know." "Well, I can't tell you. You're the farmer. I just do the cooking. I'd sure like to have a little extra sugar in the dish." So accidentally he kills a lamb before he plants. And someone comes along, "Oh, I'm so sorry I just hurt the lamb. Here help me lift him up." And so they put him up. And only he knows what he is doing. The blood is there and sure enough he gets a good crop. "How come your crop is better?" "Well." And the first thing you know just a little compromise for things. And then they say a little compromise for position and a little for sensual experience. Oh it wasn't an open break. You see they feared the Lord and they served the gods of the land.

They are still afraid of God, but they're so hungry for some more things and some more position, a little more sensual experience. And it didn't mean, after all, that they had to renounce. After all, it didn't mean a break. They still went every Sabbath day to the Tabernacle and they still prayed, they still said the blessing before the meals. It was just so subtle and only God saw it. And it didn't affect their social standings at all. Do you see what's happened? Do you see what's taken place? And where God had a people that had seen Him in miracle power. Men that stood by when the walls of Jericho came down. Men that had seen the armies put to flight. Men had been there when God's power was unleashed. Now their sons are subtly going out and building the stones for alters to Baal, Ashtoreth, and Moloch. And it is necessary for God to turn His anger upon His own people.

Oh, dear heart tonight, do you recognize the danger in which always the people of God stand? Do you recognize the danger in which you stand? Do you realize what is involved in this business of belonging to Jehovah?

Let's bring it down to the present time. Before Jesus Christ found you, you were died in your trespasses and sin. What does this mean? You served yourself. You were the god in your own life. You did what pleased you. What did you do? In some matter, in some direction, to some degree you served the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. You worshiped Baal, Ashtoreth, and Moloch.

What does it mean to repent? Repentance means a change of mind, a change of direction, a change of intension, and purpose. Previously, you've said I'm the god of my life. If I want to satisfy my appetites for honor by cheating in school, I'll cheat. If I want to satisfy my appetites for things by stealing a little money, I'll steal. If I want to satisfy my appetites for experience by being immoral, I will be immoral. This was the attitude of the sinner. God of his own life, ruling his own life. He was serving Baal, Ashtoreth, and Moloch even though he never craved a figure and never built an altar. Nevertheless, the very principle had become operative in the life of the sinner. And so in the call of Jesus Christ came it was what, it was to turn to God from idols. To serve the living and true God and this is the essence of repentance.

To turn to God. What does it mean to turn to God? God made me. God knows my appetites. God knows my urges. God knows my needs. And God has a right and proper way for all of these to be satisfied. And I'll turn to God to rule, God to govern, God to what seems right to Him. I'll renounce my deity and the idols I have erected. Now commit myself to His sovereignty. So no one can know savingly know Jesus Christ until he has turned to God to govern from idols which he's turned. And this is what you did when you savingly repented. You renounced your own deity. You renounced your right to rule. You renounced the god of this world and the gods he caused you to serve. You were no longer living to gratify the lust of the eyes. You were no longer living to gratify the lust of the flesh or the pride of life. You had repented. You said, the only one worthy of serving is Jesus Christ the only one worthy of being obeying is the living God. The only One worthy of worship is the triune God of heaven and earth Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And so repentance was to turn to God from idols, to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven.

And so on the basis of your repentance and your receiving of Jesus Christ as Lord to govern as well as Savior to deliver. God for the sake of His Son remitted your sins and pronounced you clean and brought you out from under the burden of guilt and the sentence of death. For the sword of His wrath had been aimed at you had been a sheath in the heart of His Son. And the arrows of His anger have been put against your breast loosed into the Lord Jesus Christ. So because He had died for you, you were forgiven. My friend you have no part in His forgiveness until you had renounced the God of this world and the idols He caused you to serve. Until you've taken down the alter of Baal—lust of the eye, the alter to Ashtoreth—the lust of the flesh, and the alter to Moloch—the pride of life. There was no possibility of your having any saving part in the death of Jesus Christ. For He said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Matt. 18:3; Luke 13:3)

Now having come on the grounds and perhaps I speak to some that only had a name to live. They've only had certain basic truths, certain concepts rather than actually having met Him in repentance and faith. Perhaps I speak to you and you're in that state or in that condition and you're in that way and you've never savingly bowed before Jesus Christ. Then I submit to you that your religion all the ordinances and ceremonies you've experienced all the things that have been part and parcel of your life are utterly inadequate for unless you've turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and you have no part in His retentive love. For repentance is essential and that's why this book that our Brother Hegre mentioned so absolutely indispensable for the first chapter is that of repentance and its proper place and its importance.

This is what we are talking about. When you came on the basis having renounced the god of this world and all of the machines that he erects to engages us. You saw Jesus Christ dying for you, but wait a moment what happened afterward? You still had urges. You still had appetites. You still were hungry. You still had sexual urges. You still had appetite for knowledge, and for position, and security and for pleasure and you had all of the learned responses, all of the attitudes you'd acquired, you'd carried all of them into this new life of forgiveness. Oh, you have eternal life, but you still had carried with you into forgiveness the previously fixed attitudes you'd had.

It wasn't long until you found that you were tempted. What was it? Oh just such a little thing for position, such a little thing for pleasure, such a little thing for possession. If you could just say a sarcastic word, you could sort of step on somebody's neck a little higher in your own esteem. So criticism came and all criticism and all sarcasm, and all gossip and as its basic interest the pride of life. The worship of Moloch to build yourself up at someone else's expense. That's why God says, "They that whisper and backbite are worthy of death," because it is the worship of Moloch. (Rom. 1:30-32) That's why God say, lasciviousness and an evil imagination are the worship of Ashtoreth, because it is immorality on the mental level. And so you found that you couldn't do certain things, but your mind did and you tolerated and encouraged it. And never realized that the mind is the womb of the action, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Pro. 23:7)

And so you were tempted in the direction to go back to the alter and worship Ashtoreth. Do you not see how subtle Satan is? And he is constantly trying to lure us back to the alters of Baal and Ashtoreth and Moloch. Oh he put up some grotesque idol as he does in Africa we would spurn it. We are not so degraded as to bow before stone greasy and filthy or weird caricatures that are erected. Oh no he is far too subtle for that. He won't do that with us, but it is some little thing, some little thing, some little possession, some little position, some little experience and this comes. We fail to realize its intrinsic nature that it is set in our path by the god of the world would seek to destroy us. We've got to recognize therefore as long as we walk in the world we're

going to be continually pressed and tempted. Our Lord Jesus has never promised any state of grace that will immunize you to temptation. Do you know that? I have people coming to me saying, "Well now, I thought I had victory. I thought I was died. I thought I knew something of the cross, but I'm still being tempted." Oh my dear whoever taught that there would ever come a time in your experience when you couldn't be tempted. I do not of anyone that so teaches. For this would make you holier than our Lord was, "was in all points tempted like as we are." (Heb. 4:15)

Temptation is the proposition presented to the intellect to gratify a good appetite in a bad way. You will be. But if you can come to the place where you can deal with the temptation as though it was the finished sin and come right at that moment that your heart is deflected in the direction of the alter of Baal, Ashtoreth, or Moloch. All that you will ever be tempted are in these three. And you'll see it and you'll deal with it at that place as what it is.

What is God's method of keeping us from the tragedy that is set forth here the third generation? What is His method? Well His method is always the same and that is the cross, the cross. And so it was that the reason the third generation in Israel failed God was because they had failed to go through the Jordan. Remember God said I going to put a pile of stones in the bottom of the river and then we're going to put a pile of stones in the bank of the river. And I want you to bring your children down and I want you to explain to your children that those twelve stones in the bottom of the river are a people that have died, that have been crucified and buried. And those twelve stones on the banks of the river are a people that have been raised to walk in newness of life. And I want you to bring your children down here, that they'll learn the testimony of death and resurrection.

What was it? Why? Because they thought that their fathers and their grandfathers experience was enough for them. And dear heart, I am looking at some of you tonight and you are allowing that because you've learned the words of the crucified life and the words of the sanctified life, the words of identification and you've emotionally consented to it and intellectually adopted that this is enough and it isn't enough! You've got to go down into the river if you're ever to come up on the other side in victory. It's to go down in death that you can live in resurrection life.

I fear for every movement for that third generation is the generation to whom the words are sufficient and take the place of the reality. Do I speak to someone tonight learned the words of our crucifixion with Christ and our burial with Christ and our resurrection with Christ. And you've left the words substitute for the vitality and the reality of your union with Christ in death. If that's the case with you, may walk as your fathers have walked. But your spiritual children will follow the gods of the land, Baal, Ashtoreth, and Moloch. What does it mean to you? God wants a witness, but the only ones that can carry the ark are the ones that have known the cross. The only ones that can witness for Him are the ones that gone into the Jordan of death to self and resurrection in Christ. And unless you've done that somehow that in the secret part of your life you have already begun to worship Baal, Ashtoreth, and Moloch. Nobody knows it. Perhaps only you. But you realize there is an aura of unreality and it can't be there any longer. What about it? What are you going to do?

* Reference such as: Delivered at Bethany Fellowship, Minneapolis, MN in the Evening by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.