

Soul Idolatry

by Dean Taylor

Soul idolatry is giving honor and worship to the creature which is due to the Creator alone, making them idols and committing idolatry.

Duration: 1:24:30

Scripture: 1 Timothy 2:15, 2 Timothy 2:21, Titus 2:11, Hebrews 11:1, 1 John 2:15-16, 1 John 5:21

Topics: "Idolatry"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of summarizing key verses in the Bible to make them practical and applicable to our lives. He mentions several summary verses, such as 1 Timothy 2:15, which states that Jesus came to save sinners, and Hebrews 11:1, which defines faith as the substance of things hoped for. The preacher also highlights Titus 2:11 as a summary verse for grace, stating that the grace of God brings salvation to all. The main message of the sermon is to love not the world and its desires, but to live righteously and look forward to the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

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Thank you for sharing that testimony, Brother. I've been blessed here, too. I'll say we do have our own problems, but I've been blessed.

I don't know if we can completely appreciate all the wonderful blessings that God keeps pouring on us. We hear these wonderful messages, we have these fellowships together, and being able to meet with one another, it's a blessing to my heart. I'm Dean Taylor.

I'm one of the elders over at the new church, the Living Hope Christian Fellowship, and greetings to you in Jesus' name this morning, this evening. The message that I have tonight, God has put on my heart when it was told to me that I was going to be sharing at this leadership seminar. Of course, there's a little bit of trembling in that, and as I started to think about that, this message just kept coming over and over to me.

It's a hard message. It's a message that comes from a bird, like Brother Mark was talking about last night. It's a hard message because it's a message that also comes from mistakes.

I'm not up here to say that I've done all these things right, or that I've been perfect, or these different things, these different areas that God's going to touch on, that I've been perfect in all those. It's just the opposite. I'm coming to you from an area of mistakes.

So, but I trust God that I've learned something from those mistakes. And I have something that I want to get into your hearts. I want to go beyond the surface this evening.

When I look over all these faces, and some are familiar, but most of you are not, I look on it and I want to crack through. I want to get through the facade. I want to get through the surface and come deep into your heart this evening because I have a burden that I believe is from the Lord.

I have a burden. It reminds me, when I think about it, and I look over this sea of faces here, it reminds me of a battle that Napoleon once fought. He got in front of a lake and it was winter, the hard part of winter, and these people were trying to cross the lake to come and to get them.

So, Napoleon had the idea, well what we'll do is we'll bomb, we'll take the cannons and we'll shoot the ice. And as we shoot the ice, it'll break the ice and then the enemy will fall in. So, they kept trying.

They shot the cannons and there it did, just skimmed across the ice. They shot the cannons and it skimmed across the ice. So, he thought about it and he said, okay, I'll tell you what, take the cannons and aim them straight up.

Straight up. And so they did that, they shot those cannons, the cannonballs went straight up and straight back down and cracked the ice. And the enemy fell into the water and defeated.

That's what my prayer is tonight. That the words that I have, that I can get beyond the surface, that I can just preach as straight up unto the Lord God, that He would take those words, bring them back and crack the ice in the hearts of you today to be able to see what this message is. The title of the sermon tonight is Soul Idolatry.

Soul Idolatry. Can we pray? Dear Heavenly Father, I come to You trembling tonight, dear Lord God. I pray, Father, take these words tonight, oh God.

I pray, Father, I need You to preach this sermon tonight, dear God. I need You, Father, to take these words, Lord, because You gave me this message, I feel, for a reason. That there's someone here, dear God.

There's some people that are here that need to hear this, dear Lord. God, I pray, oh Father, speak, Lord. Speak, oh God.

Let us hear what You have to say to the churches tonight. God, we pray in Jesus' name, Amen. At a conference like this, it's kind of easy to get overwhelmed with a whole lot of teaching.

Right? It's sort of like sometimes, I think of the idea of trying to take a drink out of a fire hydrant that's cranked full open. And you're trying to take a drink out of that. Well, thank the Lord for the tape ministry that we can take some of that home and decipher it and take it out and look at it.

But in times like this, I'm a simple man. And in times like this, I like to grab a hold of something that's simple and practical. And the bird in my heart tonight that keep coming to me was make it simple and practical.

Practical. Touch real things. Real situations that we go through.

Make it simple and practical. I love these summary types of passages that we find in the Scripture. They let me just grab a hold of it.

One of my favorites is there asking the question, what is this about Jesus Christ? Why did He come into the earth? And the answer to that is in 1 Timothy 2.15. If you can quote it with me. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. Another one of my favorites.

We hear a lot about faith. What is faith? What's a good one for that? Hebrews 11.1 Say it with me. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for.

The evidence of things not seen. It's a beautiful summary, isn't it? Just lets you grab a hold of it. And own it.

We hear about grace. A good summary verse for grace is in Titus 2.11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. What does it do? Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

Good summary verse. Amen. Amen.

Well, the text of this sermon tonight is one like it. Turn to 1 John 2.15 A powerful summary verse. The text is 1 John 2.16 I'm going to read to you a verse before that and a verse after it.

1 John 2.16 I'm going to start at 15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

That's the preface to this verse. The world, if there's any love of the world in you, he's making it simple, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passes away in the lust thereof. But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. John says, all that is in the world.

All that is in the world. This is a summary verse and a powerful one. All that is in the world.

In this verse, John reduces all the forms of idolatry, lust, the wars, greed, all the wiles and fiery darts and tactics and battle plans of Satan into just three things. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. All that Satan has ever defeated you with, all that his tactics, the demonic tactics that he has against the church of God this evening, has been simplified for us tonight.

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. How does this help us? Consider for a minute the idea of color. How we perceive it into our visual reality.

Think of color. The colors that we perceive come from our eyes into our mind and it comes there in untold millions of varieties of shades and different types of mixing of colors and all these different things. But do you know, and I'm sure most of you do, that every color that you're seeing right now, look around, every single color is brought down to three primary colors.

Three primary colors. And this is a vital information. Think of the information, that information to an artist or to a printer.

Otherwise, you'd be overwhelmed by the myriads of possibilities and the different shades and colors that he has to go and gather to make a painting or to make a printing somewhere. Likewise, the grace-giving artisan of your soul has by these verses equipped us with the fundamentals necessary to visualize the enemy, to see his battlements, and to defeat him, to be the final victor. That's what this verse does for us.

It's a summary verse. Let's break it down a little bit. Look at it there.

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The lust of the flesh. All that is that within us, in our own physical body, the cravings when it's used in an inordinate way.

These cravings that are attracted and wants to be satisfied are the lust of the flesh. They are the carnal desires that your body longs for. These things lead to such things as adultery, pornography, to gluttony.

It causes us to want to feel the feeling of drunkenness, to feel the sensation that you get from tobacco. It makes you want to sit in front of a computer and to be able to stare at things that would just arouse things within your body. It is the lust of the flesh.

The lust of the flesh. The lust of the flesh. The second one, the lust of the eyes.

This is something of wanting more. Of having to have more. Of wanting possessions and things.

I want more than what I have. I'm not content with what I have. In a word, it is covetousness.

It is the desiring of possessions or anything that you're craving after, of your fellow man or anything. Think about it. All the shopping.

All the things that clutter our minds. It's the lust of the eyes. The third is the pride of life.

The seeking of honor. The seeking of possessions. The ascendancy over our brethren.

This is the pride of life. We can have all the other things, but still within the worldly man, it's not fun unless I'm ruling over somebody else. And it's the pride of life that draws man to have those sorts of feelings.

All that is in the world. The lust of the flesh. The lust of the eyes.

And the pride of life. Now these mix together. Just like the artist takes those colors and mixes them together and forms all the different things, Satan, the world, mixes this devilish triad of depravity to make the just right temptation in your life to get into you, to cause you to sin.

This is what he does. But when we are armed with this code buster that we get here in 1 John, we're able to recognize when those things come. That's tainted by the lust of the flesh.

That's tainted by the lust of the eyes. That's tainted by the pride of life. We see this all through Scripture.

Think about it with me now. Every temptation that we read in the Word of God can be brought down to those three things. That's what John is telling us.

From Eve in the garden to Jesus in the wilderness. Let's look at those two famous temptations. In Genesis 3, starting at verse 5, look at that.

Genesis 3, starting at verse 5, And the serpent said unto the woman, starting at verse 4 actually, Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods. Which one's that? The pride of life.

Knowing good and evil. Verse 6, And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food... What's that? Lust of the flesh. And it was pleasant to the eyes in a tree to be desired.

What's that? Lust of the eyes. To make one wise. The pride of life.

She took the fruit thereof and did eat. And gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. Right from the beginning.

Right from the beginning. Our Lord. Notice how He recognizes it and defeats it.

Luke 4, verse 2. Look at that. Luke 4, verse 2. Being 40 days tempted of the devil, and in those days he did eat nothing. And when they were ended, he afterwards hungered.

He just fasted for 40 days. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. The lust of the flesh.

Jesus knew that tactic. And Jesus answered him, saying to him, It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. Okay, there's the one try.

And the devil, taking him up into the high mountains, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee. The pride of life.

And the glory of them. The splendor and the beauty of them. The lust of the eyes.

For that is delivered unto me and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou therefore will worship me, all shall be thine. Jesus recognized it.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan. For it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. So you see, even Satan himself, coming against the Lord himself, uses these three tactics to come against Him in His hour of temptation.

But thanks to the Lord, He has given us to be able to break this code. It's important in a battle to be able to break the enemy's code. As a matter of fact, in World War II, there was an interesting code there.

The Germans had devised a sort of code that kept sounding just like static. It was just static. They didn't know how to break it.

It didn't seem to have any rhyme or reason to it. They didn't know what to think about it. One of the men working for the intelligence people took the sound of this and recorded it onto a phonograph.

And this was the old days, and they had to, you know, wind that phonograph up. So when they played that, he kept playing it over and over and over again so that he would hear what the code is and perhaps he would think of something to break it. But one time while he was there, he forgot to wind his phonograph and the thing played real slowly.

And all of a sudden, it was simple Morse code just sped way up. And he was able to break the plans of the enemy and thwart him in his efforts. That's what the importance of breaking this code is today.

Of understanding the tactics of Satan. So to look at this, let's go deeper now. To understand the depth of this passage, let us consider the book as a whole for a minute.

Throughout this epistle, the epistle of 1 John, John speaks significantly about our inheritance in Christ. That beautiful thing of what happens when we are in Christ. He talks about it.

All the time he talks about it. He demonstrates that through this epistle that our relationship of being in Christ is so efficacious, it is so, in other words, realistically and practically effective in our life that once the saint is connected to this source of being in Christ, it causes him to live a holy life. Not just in thought and in doctrine, but that being connected in Christ, that this will change his life.

This beautiful fellowship with Jesus consumes John's word in 1 John, does it not? Along with the teaching of this intimacy, however, is the understanding of God's righteous jealousy. Regardless of how beautiful this sounds, how winsome, how desirous He makes His divine relationship appear to us, regardless of how wondrously beneficent our Lord is to grant us this sort of grace in our life, that rightfully so, if He's granting this to us and giving this to us, He also is rightfully jealous to share that fellowship, that intimate place in our souls with no person, no person, no possession, no advantage, and no position. So, he goes through the book explaining that.

But he ends with a curious passage. Go to the last verse in 1 John. He ends the book with a curious passage.

After all that, little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. After discussing all these practical blessings, the pitfalls in the Christian life, he concludes, he summarizes, he ends the whole thing up with little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Is it an added thought? Is it out of context some way with the rest of the book, do you think? I don't think it is. And I think it gives us a key to understanding our passage there in 2.16. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. In the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul mentions this idea of soul idolatry.

He talks about it. And prophetically he exposes that the judgment of those soul idolaters would be eternal damnation. He put it this way in Ephesians 5.5 For this ye know, that no warmonger, which is what that is, is a homosexual prostitute, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, have any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

He reveals here that a covetous man, and this we know, he says, do we know? Did we lose something over these ages? He said it as a matter of fact. And this we know, that a covetous man is an idolater. He

says that.

That is a man who is pining away, wanting things that he doesn't have. He's calling an idolater. In other places of Scripture, Paul shows it as not just a covetous man, but anyone who is harboring immoral desires.

To the Philippians, he specifically adds gluttony to this list. Gluttony. Leaving that person with the same damnable inheritance as the other.

Gluttony. Saying this in Philippians 3.19 Whose end is destruction. Whose God is their belly.

And whose glory is in their shame. Who mines earthly things. You see, God desires your whole heart.

He will share His glory with nothing else. And no one else. Our summary passage in 2.16 exposes this.

The lust of the flesh. The lust of the eyes and the pride of life. These lustful appetites.

These desires for possessions and positions of honor. And the context you see of idolatry is the carnal man's pagan trinity. The carnal man's pagan trinity.

After the sensual desires of the flesh, after coveting things, and having the pride of life, he's showing that it is a God within the pagan man. These are the idols of the worldly man to which they prostrate their souls to. And so if we could, I'd like to look at a definition.

A definition of what God is calling idolatry. And what God is calling worship. There's a good definition by David Clarkson about idolatry.

It's in the recent remnant here. This definition is in there. And writing around the year 1650, he defines it like this.

It is to give that honor and worship to the creature which is due to the Creator alone. When this worship is communicated to other things, whatever they are, we thereby make them idols and commit idolatry. Let me tell you, one of the misconceptions about idolatry, whether it's now or it's done way back in times past, is the idea that these were a people that were just bizarre.

That were consumed with weird things. They had bones in their nose, and they were beside themselves. But see, the scary thing is that's not the way it was.

It was people right there along with them in the tabernacle. It was people right there along with them in their churches that they had at that time, and they were serving false gods. And it's the same way it is today.

It's become so common. It's become something that just happens that it's closer than you think. It's closer than you think.

So looking at this, there is two-fold worship that we offer to God. One of those, of course, is external. External worship is that which we do by gestures of the body.

Things like we were doing here. Praising the Lord. Serving.

I want to serve you. And those things that we do with outward signs. Venerating ourselves before God.

Prostrating ourselves. Or as Brother Mark put last night, God, anything you want. These outward signs of our gestures that we do are important to God, and they make up our external part of our worship.

And God, it does matter to God. He says in Exodus 20 v. 5, speaking of idols, Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God.

So even our outward gestures are important. What you give honor to, reverence to, by your posture, makes a difference. I'm not going to preach but one sentence on this.

Be careful. What you gesture, you put, and swear your allegiance to, be careful. The focus tonight is internal.

As was said before, the idea of internal things, is that that which the mind is most taken up with, that which the heart is spending its time thinking about, following after, and pondering, and going through your mind and your actions, that is internal worship. And those are the things that we're focusing on tonight. They also have a matter of worship that we offer to God.

What's on your mind right now? What was on your mind five hours ago? What was on your mind this morning when you woke up? It's important to God. It's important to God. So because of this, there's two types of idolatry.

Do you realize this? Are you following the line of thinking? There's two types of worships to God. There's two types of idolatry to God. And idolatry makes you an idolater which is punishable by death by God.

He won't tolerate it. So, when we look at these things, of course you're external. If someone's going to externally worship an image, and bow down and prostrate before themselves, give reverence to it or something, it is external worship.

We don't have a difficulty usually seeing the problem there. That happens a lot of times in some of the churches there where they're venerating images and such. God will not have it.

The other is the internal type. And this we miss. That same way of giving your heart to something, if that's given to something other than God, it is idolatry.

Again, in Exodus, "...And God spake all these words, saying..." This is when He gave the law, Exodus 20, verse 1. "...And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." One little quick word about that phrase, "...have no other gods before Me." Sometimes it may seem like it's a matter of priorities. Before Me.

You won't have any other gods that you're putting in the place of Me. Now, you may have something else in your life, but I am the Lord thy God, so you'll have nothing before Me. That's not what that word means.

It's a common Hebrew word. The word in Hebrew is panin. And it means in My presence.

You're not going to have anything that I can see in My presence. Nothing. Nothing.

That's what the word means. Do you know it's the same word used in Genesis 3.8? "...And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the panin." The presence of the Lord amongst the trees in the garden. It's the same word used,

brother, in 2 Chronicles 7.14. "...If My people, which are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray, and panin..." Seek the face of God.

He sees. He looks. He's watching.

It's common. It's hundreds of times through the Scripture. His presence.

Don't mess up that interpretation before Me. It's before the presence of God who sees everything. Who sees everything.

Little children, keep yourselves from idolatry. In the Old Testament, we frequently shake our heads in dismay over their constant infidelity and the whole manner of idolatry. But are we any better? Observe with me now, if we could, I would like to take us through those different forms of idolatry.

I want to look at each one of them and what they represent. And I want you to ask something in your heart. Is that idol in you? Is that idol in your heart? Is that idol in your mind? So if we could for a moment, could we pray? If you have a child here and you've finally got him settled down and you've got a good position, don't stand up.

But other than that, let's stand to our feet and let's pray. I don't want this to be a history lesson. As we look through these idols, it's very imperative.

They're there for our learning. They're there for us to look into our hearts and to analyze. Is this there? Let's pray.

Oh God, Lord, I pray, Lord God, search our hearts tonight, Lord. Search our hearts tonight, Father God. Search our hearts tonight, Lord, how You grieved over that idolatry of those Israelites, Lord.

We read it, Lord. And we just think, how could they do it? But Father, You revealed to us, oh God, that how much You're grieving now over us as You've given the Holy Spirit to us, Father. But still, our hearts are divided.

Lord, can You reveal that tonight, oh God? Can You reveal it, Lord? Crack through, Lord. Take those cannonballs, Lord, and crack through the pride. Crack through the defensiveness, Lord.

Crack through that tonight, Father, I pray, as we look into these different Israelites. Let's not look on them, oh God. Help us not to look on them and think, oh, look at them.

But Lord, for us to look at us. Oh, I'd have mercy on us tonight. In Jesus' name, Amen.

You can be seated. Some of the things I'm going to be sharing are graphic. They're disgusting.

And they're in the Word of God to show us just how graphic and disgusting they are. During the time of Israel's infidelity, they're made before the captivity. The worship of three gods stand out.

The worship of Astaroth. The worship of Baal. And the worship of Moloch.

I would like tonight to liken these two to our verse. The lust of the flesh. The lust of the eyes.

And the pride of life. Look at these three. I'm not the first to make that comparison.

Others have. Reedhead did. Prattney did.

Probably Wilkerson has made those comparisons. It's not new to me. So look to those things and let's look at how the comparison of those three gods and what they are in the hearts of God's people and how He will not tolerate it.

Oh, we pray for revival. Oh, we pray for things and we want God and we want to know why God? Why? But if there's idols right there in the sanctuary, if right there when Paul says, What? Know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Lord? What? These things are sacred places. Christ died for you.

He's jealous for every single part of you. Let's look at them. The worship of Ashtaroth.

Ashtaroth is derived from the word star. Scripture refers to her as the Queen of Heaven. She is the moon god.

Sometimes also seen in different traditions as the wandering star of Venus. The Venus god. She takes the form in cultures in the name of Ishtar and other cultures.

And this god is perhaps the oldest form of idolatry known. It is usually represented in the form of a grossly naked, unproportioned female. Often times, it's seen as holding a child or having children or animals and it's feeding and things like that around its feet.

It's a wicked beast. A wicked, wicked beast. There was an entire town in Scripture dedicated and named Ashtaroth in the northeast side of Jordan.

And there, there was a giant that dwelt there and his name was Og. And he ruled as king in that area where Ashtaroth worship was rampant. And there it was.

There's a Babylonian legend that says that the descent of Ishtar came into Hades and to search for her dead husband, Tammuz. You'll hear that word in Ezekiel. Tammuz.

Was followed by the cessation of marriage in both the earth and in heaven. So if you wanted to get a baby, if you wanted something in that way, then you would pray to this god and perhaps she would grant you this. She was the god of lust.

She was the god of these sensual desires and gluttony and it became the god of these appetites. It's closer than you think. Do you know there was a statistic? A grievous statistic.

One of these men's conventions, I don't know what it was, whether it was the promise keepers or something like that. There was a mass one where there was thousands and thousands and thousands of men. And while they were there during the day praising the Lord and everything, they went back to their hotels in the evening.

And in the evening, they were able to take the statistics of the pornography that was played on the television in those hotels and it skyrocketed. In the morning, the men are there worshipping God. In the evening, when the temptation came to click, click, they came to Ashtoreth.

Why? This god as we see through the Old Testament, as we looked at, stays tenaciously close to the hearts of the people. This god of lust was a hard one to lose. We see it everywhere in the pre-Babylonian captivity.

The pagan rites, as commentators say, are some of the most despicable. The commentators mention that you'll see them come into the Scriptures talking about the grooves. Remember reading about some of that in the Scripture? And the grooves were there.

And God was grieved over them. What this was, was a tree that was cut down. And the tree was then cut down and then some kind of image made in the shape of that cut down tree.

And then something about the grooves that were there. They would go there and practice their immorality and they would fall into this lust and this disgust and would give their souls to this thing. Oh, but they're out on the high places.

Who sees them? Nobody sees them. God saw them. Every form of debauchery occurred here under the name of religious observances.

In essence, it was an excuse to look on the form of the female wickedly and inappropriately. And with a religious license that allowed them to fall into every form of gluttony and intemperance. God calls it an abomination.

And He is furious in the Scriptures when we read of those things. God calls it an abomination. Paul said, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame who mine earthly things.

You know who I'm talking to tonight. Is your affection there before an asteroth? Have you been there and you've been mesmerized by these images? You've been fighting against these television flickering blue satanic lights? Or you've been looking at these magazines and you've been there in the nighttime and you want to be away from it, but there you are in front of that Internet and you're ruled by it? It is the worship of asteroth. And it rules the heart.

You see, God won't share that with asteroth. He won't share it with her. He will not.

Please be honest tonight. In God's presence, does He see you bowing to this? Do you serve this God? It can happen in food. Do you find your pleasure with food? You're depressed unless you eat something.

You're depressed unless you get a hold of something. I've just got to feed my flesh somehow. I've got to smoke a cigarette.

I've got to get a drink. My flesh is appeased. The lust of the flesh.

It's asteroth. It's wrong. It's wrong.

You know that when the Israelites finally were headed... I'll tell you some good news. When the Israelites finally had finished with their wandering in the wilderness and they decided, okay, the last of those who were scared to go into the Promised Land had died and Joshua was heading, do you know what? They had to go through asteroth to get there. Those in the first generation who were too scared because there might be a giant, the new generation went and took the giant.

And you know they took that giant Og and they killed him, it says. And there's a beautiful passage in the Scriptures. It's in Deuteronomy 3.11. This can be true to you today.

And it just says there, For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants. Behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron. Is it not in Revah of the children of Ammon? Nine cubits was the length thereof and four cubits the breadth of it after the cubits of a man.

It was a museum piece that this God who was killing people, who was this giant who was in the midst of this area of asteroth, when this giant was killed, they said, did you see his bed? He's dead now, but you can go look at his bedpost over there. It's huge. Tonight, it can become a museum piece for you tonight.

You can say, that thing used to get me. You see that Internet thing over there? Look at it! It doesn't affect me anymore. You can be free from it and you can let that be like a museum piece to you.

It is God that can do that tonight. Don't go through any more of this. Don't share the glory of God with another.

Look at it. And look at it strongly tonight. Make this giant a mere museum piece in your pursuit of the Holy Land.

The next one was the worship of Baal. Baal worship. Very closely related with asteroth.

Baal worship intertwined itself with her. As she was the goddess of the moon, Baal worship was the sun worship. The stone pillar represented Baal worship, where the tree represented the asteroth.

The stone pillar representing strength. The tree representing her fruitfulness. He was the sun god, and because of that, he was both beneficent and he was destructive.

He would give and he would kill. On the one hand, he gave light and warmth to his worshipers. But when the summer months became fierce, he destroyed the vegetation, which apparently he or his partner, asteroth, would give that fruitfulness he was then killing.

The Hebrew word is lord or possessor. Possessor. The idea here is a possession.

It's a land. Perhaps every little area there, little farmland was gathered around, and there in the midst of it, there was this little stone altar out there. Old stone altar.

It was the Baal of that area. It was a principality. He ruled that district.

He ruled it. And when men wanted that possession, when they wanted something, they knew it was wrong. But the crops are down.

Things are failing. God, is it with us? I mean, is this obvious or what? He's not with us. So as they go, and they still have to provide for the family.

I mean, you've got to provide for... When your wife still went to market, and she was there, she was jealous. She wasn't able to get the things that her neighbors were able to get. And then one day, he's out there and he notices, you know, I noticed my neighbor there, he throws a little lamb every now and then on that old altar.

Why don't I give it a try? And the worst thing that happens is his land prospers. And he gets greedy. And he wants more, and he wants more, and more.

Now, he didn't stop going to the tabernacle. He was still right there along with them. Oh yeah, we're going to still keep going and sacrificing.

I mean, we have the Day of the Atonement. We can have these things. We can do that thing right.

We're not giving up God. But right there along with it was this desire for more, and for more, and for more. And it wouldn't stop.

It was Baal worship. It was Baal worship. We call it covetousness, which is a sin in its own right.

And the root of the sin, though, we just learned that God called idolatry. Let me ask you something tonight. Open up your mind to yourself and ask yourself this.

Look at it. Look at the pictures in your mind. Is it full of images of new houses, and new cars, and new dresses, and new things, new possessions, new hunting trips, new things that you're coveting after, that you want and you desire, that you're lusting for? You know what? God wants those thoughts.

He wants those desires. And He won't share it with any of those things. It is Baal worship.

Give it up tonight. Baal worship was also very persistent all through. We see that as you read through the Old Testament.

That principality, which in Ephesians 6.12, what does it say? We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. These things are alive and well today. Principalities amongst all these things.

Oh, you think it's innocent. Wanting all these things and running after these things. There's principalities behind it.

He's told us that it's our job to be warring against those things. Well, all through the Old Testament you see this, except for a certain time. And that was under Gideon, when he was a judge.

And I won't go there, but in Gideon 6, he gets a burden to cast down all these Baal things that he's going to set up. And he destroys their images. And then he sets up an altar to the Lord right there in front of it.

And he sacrifices to the Lord God. Well, the people woke up in the morning and they said, what's going on? What is this? And they called his father out to come and take care of it. He rebukes them back to him.

And you know what they call him at that point? Jerubbabel. And what does that mean? Let Baal plead. You can do that tonight.

Is your mind full of images? It's a serious thing. Let Baal plead. Just knock him down tonight.

You don't have to have these things in your life. You don't have to have these things. Think of the Internet again.

Did John Bunyan have any idea what he titled Vanity Fair? Vanity Fair? Would you consider the Internet? What shall you buy? They say when you come into Vanity Fair in the Pilgrim's Progress. What shall you buy? Click, click, click, click. What shall you buy? Oh, be careful.

God wants that time. God wants that time. The last one is the most difficult for me to preach.

I've made these mistakes. It's also the most graphic, the most disgusting. It's the worship of Moloch.

The God of fire. The worship of Moloch. The name appears to have originally been from the Hebrew word for king.

And this worship, the worship of Moloch, is to obtain the ascendancy over your brother. It is for pride. It is for position.

It is the pride of life. It is to do anything to get what you want in position. You can have all you want.

You can have all the glandular exercises you can dream of. You can have all the possessions, but it's just no fun, remember, unless you can have something better than somebody else. And that is the position there of the pride of life.

And the worship of Moloch, we see in this. Their priests were very high, right there with the kings. And when the Lord rebukes them, He says, I will cast down the kings and the priests of Moloch.

It's as if they're in a position of authority. Oh, to chum with those priests was something in that time. To be there with those priests was something.

In Josiah's reformation, in 2 Kings 23.10, he talks about it. He says, And he defiled tofeth, that word tofeth, which means drum, or comes from the word drum in Hebrews, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Moloch. The most disgusting thing about this rite is what they sacrificed.

They sacrificed their children. That's what they sacrificed. When they wanted it all, they sacrificed their children.

Passing through this fire was no mere purification like, let's say, a pagan baptism or something. They screamed, and they hollered, and they died. Psalms 106, verse 34, talks about it.

It says this, They did not destroy the nations concerning whom the Lord commanded them. This is Psalm 106, 34. But were mingled among the heathen.

They mingled this around. A little of God and a little of these other gods. Some God, but some of the other gods.

And learned their works. And they served their idols, which was the snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan.

And the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their own works and went a-whoring with their own inventions. Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against His people, insomuch that He abhorred His own inheritance.

And He gave them into the hands of the heathen and they that hated them and ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand. The worship of Moloch.

The archaeological discoveries of this was disgusting. They found areas where they dug up these things and under it were filled with the bones of children. It was a man, seated, the images were, with his hands outlifted like this.

His head was the head of an ox. The head of an ox. And in his hand there was like a grill or a pipe that would allow this pan to heat up extra hot.

Heat up hot. And then, that word tofeth comes from the Hebrew word drum. Because in that place there was lots of noise.

Lots of music. Keep it loud! Keep the music loud and the drums playing and they kept it. So that it would dampen the screams of the children.

And they took this thing. They would take these children and would take them there. Remember, these are not just pagans.

These are the chosen people. These are Israelites. But for some reason, something went wrong.

Something went wrong. If I could just get a little position here. I could just get ahead.

I could just get ahead of this. So they took their children and they cast it onto that pan. Burning and crying and screaming.

But the music played on. Louder and louder. Do you know what that place became known as? That archeological spot? Gehenna.

That's where tofeth became. Gehenna. The place where they killed these children in this fire burning.

In order to drown, the cries of the victims of flutes played on. The drums were beat and the mothers stood there if they're brave without tears to show their voluntary character of offering this. It wasn't just this.

It was set up with a set of levels that you could ascend to. Seven chapels was mentioned there. Seven chapels were there.

And the first, anyone could come and you could offer fine flour. And you would get something there. The next would be a turtle dove.

The next little tabernacle level would be a lamb. Then a ram. Then a calf.

Finally an ox. And then if you really could go all the way, you would go into that tabernacle where that priest and those high priests were and that moloch was there and you would throw your children there. That's what you would do.

You would throw your children there. Why? Isn't this completely unnatural? And that's exactly what idolatry is. It causes something.

Satan wants you to do something that's so completely against nature that would cause you... Why in the world is he doing that? What's causing him to do something that's so completely... Why would a mother who so tenderly loves her child want to fall to something like that? And that's exactly what it is. It is debased. It is turned over.

And it is wicked. But what about us? In the pursuit of power? In the pursuit of position? A new job? Us ministers? We press on and on and on leaving our children behind. Sacrificing them to the God of moloch.

It's a serious thing tonight. It's a serious thing. You know, I'm a young minister.

Just turned 40 last week. And I still have a house full of little children. And I have determined in my heart not to sacrifice these children to the God of moloch.

I have determined that. You know, I look through church history. I'm a student of church history.

And I ponder sometimes, what happened to that second and third generation? How do you have some of these great men? I don't want to mention any of their names right now, but these great men who went across the sea and did these things. And yet, the second and third generation, even of those who they were sharing with, doesn't seem to catch on. I read they did things like they gave their children to boarding homes.

Left their children someone else to raise while they pressed on there and burning a shining light somewhere in a far off land. That next generation, yes, they get born again, but they have no idea what a godly home is supposed to be. They have no idea, okay, this is how you work this thing out in practical life.

And that next generation's gone. What happened to those children? What happened to it? Thank the Lord that we are here at church that wants to be the godly home church. We care about our families.

We care about those things. We don't want that generation thing to happen to us again. But if we don't take this thing seriously, what do you think is going to be any different than us and any other movement that has come across the face of this earth? We've got to do that.

I haven't been ordained that long and I can't tell you how many brothers I have come up to me and say, brother, now, be careful. Watch your family. Don't get ahead of them.

Watch what you're doing here. Be careful with this. Be careful with that.

Don't leave your family behind. And I want to say right here tonight, thank you. Thank you.

Keep it up. It's something that we have to keep holding up. But also, what about jobs? Positions? I hope I can just get through college.

Get through school. Get this better job. Work a little harder tonight.

Honey, I know I'm home late. I know we don't have time for devotions. I know we don't have things, but we're getting ahead.

And if we get ahead, well, then I'll be able to have this little offering here. And I'll be able to give it to my children. And what an inheritance.

I'll tell you, I was down before I moved up here in a little tiny town in Texas. And a man actually said to me, they offered me more money for my job than I had ever heard of. Ever heard of.

And he said to me, I know you'll be working from about 7 until 9 or 10 in the night every night, but you'll have so much money. And yeah, you won't see... He said this. Yeah, you won't see your children coming up, but they will thank you when they get older.

He said that to me. And I just, bless the Lord, I saw going right across his head, worldly wise man, just right across him. I wasn't listening to him for a minute.

I'm serious. I'm serious. I just looked at him right like that and was able to tell him, oh no, I will not take that.

We don't have to take those things. Do you see though it's a fight? The world is coming against you. They want more of you.

They're going to say, can you work a little more? Can you do a little more of this? There's so many needs. There's so many burdens. But we don't want to sacrifice our children along the way.

We can't do that. Leviticus 20 makes this a church affair. A church affair.

Leviticus 20 verse 2. Again, Leviticus 20 verse 2. Leviticus 20 verse 2. Again, thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, whosoever he be of the children of Israel or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel that giveth any of his seed unto Moloch, he shall surely be put to death. The people of this land shall stone him with stones and I will set my face against that man and will cut him off from among his people because he hath given of his seed unto Moloch to defile my sanctuary and to profane my holy name. And if the people of this land do anyway hide their eyes from the man when he giveth his seed to Moloch and kill him not, then I will set my face against that man and against his family and will cut him off and will that go a-whoring after him to commit whoredom with Moloch from among their people.

Can we watch after one another? Brother, I'm getting awful busy. Can we watch after one another? I need it, brothers. I need it.

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. In concluding thoughts, I want you to turn to Ezekiel. We talked about this thing and my greatest fear tonight is that this thing stays in the abstract.

That as we look at these things, it doesn't hit home. The last few minutes here, I'm going to go on a journey. Let's go with the Holy Spirit into a journey into your heart.

And look what the Holy Spirit saw when He cracked open the temples there in Israel. Ezekiel 8. Here's Ezekiel sitting there. He's with the elders.

And suddenly, this vision comes upon him. And the Holy Spirit, it says there, or whatever this is in verse 2, that I behold in low likeness as an appearance of fire. From the appearance of His loins, even downwards fire.

And from the loins even upward as the appearance of brightness, as the color of amber. And He put forth His arm of His hand and took me by the hair and took me up to the heavens. I'm going to show you something that grieves me, Ezekiel.

I'm going to show you this. This is why I'm upset, Ezekiel. I want you to see this.

Took him by the lock of the hair. And took him. It says in verse 3 then, it took me between the earth and the heaven and brought me into the vision of God to Jerusalem to the door of the inner gate that looked towards the north where was the seat of the image of jealousy.

Commentators, I found thought that that perhaps was the ashtoreth, the sensual desire that's causing this jealousy, which provoked to jealousy. And behold, here's the part that chills you. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there.

So there's the temple. There's the holy place. And then right there between the mercy seats, right there, right over here, is an idol, the ashtoreth.

But over there, the Shekinah glory is still resting right there on the mercy seat. Then He said unto me, Son of Man, lift up thy eyes. Now the way towards the north.

So I lifted up my eyes the way toward the north, and behold, northward it was a gate of the altar of this image of jealousy and the entry. Another one. Six, He said furthermore unto me, Son of Man, seest thou what they do? Even the great abomination that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary, but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations.

I see the Lord's heart breaking. And He brought me to the door of the court, and when I looked, behold, a hole in the wall. Look, Ezekiel.

Those in there are doing this in private. They don't think anybody is seeing them. Look to that hole.

So, then He said unto me, Son of Man, now dig now in the wall. And when I had digged in the wall, behold, a door. And He said unto me, Go in and behold the wicked abominations that they do here.

So I went in and saw, and behold, every form of creeping things and abominable beasts and all the idols of the house of Israel portrayed all about around the walls. In your mind today, what's in there? What's in there? Images of hunting trips or desires or pictures of idolatrous things that you're looking at in your mind. What's in there? And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients, the Sanhedrin of the house of Israel.

And in the midst of them stood Jezaniah, the son of Shephen. And every man, his censer in his hand. And a thick cloud of incense went up.

Then He said unto me, Son of Man, hath thou seen what the ancients, my elders of the house of Israel, do in the dark? Every man in the chambers of his imagery? What's in the chambers of your imagery? God cares what's in the chambers of your imagery. For they say, the Lord sees us not. The Lord hath forsaken to us.

This is the besetting sin. When you get something that goes wrong in your life, it's at that point that those besetting sins come down on you and say, well, I'm gone anyway. And so you just indulge yourself into it.

Well, the Lord's not with me anyway. I'm just going to give myself to this. Well, that's what they were doing.

He said also unto me, Turn thee again, and thou shalt see greater abominations. He goes there and He sees them worshiping the Son. He sees them in the very place that He's crying out between the porch and the altar where the priest should be crying out, Spare thy people, O God.

That they had their face turned the other way worshiping the God of the Son. The Son God. And He says there, in verse 17, is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? Is this a light thing? Am I overdoing it? Is this going on in the church? Is this existing within the saints? Is this a light thing? Here's the judgment of God.

Therefore will I also deal in fury. Mine eyes shall not spare, neither will I have pity. And though they cry in my ears with a loud voice, yet will I not fear them.

It's severe. God will not share this with any other. He goes on in chapter 9 there, and He gathers up some people.

And here's the answer part. Here's the answer part. He brings some destroying angels or something there to stand before.

And He says in chapter 9, verse 3, And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon He was, to the threshold of the house. The glory departed. Ichabod.

The glory departed. And He called to the man clothed with linens and had the writer's inkhorn in his hand. And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

There's your yesterday message. Getting a burden. Is it a light thing? Do you care? Do you care if this is going on? Or are you one of those that He will put a mark on your head? And the others, He said in mine hearing, go ye after Him through the city and smite.

Let not your eye spare, nor your eye pity. And just a little quick note there in chapter 16, He speaks of Sodom and the other vision. He goes there.

And we know part of Sodom's wickedness, right? It was obviously lust of the flesh. In 16, verse 50, it says, and they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. But look at verse 49.

Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom. Here it is. This is why I destroyed Sodom.

Pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters. Neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. They don't get that too much about Sodom.

We don't get that. So where are you at tonight? Do you know what you need to do? Do you need to put this image to death tonight? Do you need to bury it? You know, you have a Lord who's loving and wants you to do that. In verse 60 of 16, He says, nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.

When I am pacified, verse 63, toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God. Are you born again today? Has this life of idolatry and truth just been something that you have before you all the time and you've never had that reality in your life? It doesn't have to be. It can be a museum piece.

It can be something that God can glorify His name in. Finally, He says in Ezekiel 36, I'm going to do something. You repent.

You destroy these images. You destroy these idols. I'm going to do something.

And you know what? I'm not going to do this, it says, in 36.21. I'm not going to do this for your sake. Not for your sake who you have profaned the heathen. Profaned by name among the heathen.

But I'm going to do this for My holy name's sake. And I will sanctify My great name, verse 23, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them and they even shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. Verse 25, then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean from all your filthiness and from all your idols and I will cleanse you.

A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you. This is the new covenant. You don't have to have these idols in your life.

That's what 1 John's all about. You don't have to live that sinful life. But He wants to reveal it.

If you're kidding yourselves, you're not being honest with yourselves, you'll be continuing there. You don't have to. A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh and I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes.

I will cause you to walk in My statutes. I will cause you to walk in My statutes and ye shall keep My judgments and do them. Praise the Lord.

Final verse. Jeremiah 13, verse 27. You can't hide this stuff from God.

You can't. Jeremiah 13, verse 27. I have seen thine adulteries and thine nayings, desirings, the lewdness of thy whoredom and thine abominations on the hills and in the fields.

Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! Wilt thou not be made clean? Will you not be made clean? When shall it once be? Will you not be made clean? When then? When? When do you think this is going to end? When? Will you not be made clean? I praise the Lord for His message, what He's given us in the Scriptures, how He searches our heart for even the outward things, but also the tendencies in our hearts that can lend to these ways. And in that, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life can be seen as temptations to us. Let's fight against it.

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. 2 Timothy 2, verse 21 says, if a man therefore purge himself from these things, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meat for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

I know Dean didn't spend a whole lot of time on the worship of God tonight, but he could have. And I think maybe if you're trembling right now thinking, oh no, it's the time for the invitation, and I have to do something, just think about the worship of God for a minute. Is there anything purer than the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ? God says 10,000 precepts I have given unto them.

1 John says, and His commandments are not grievous. Has anyone found the commandments of the Lord Jesus grievous? Have they not set us free and ministered life and light in our lives? But when you set them back against the backdrop of what you were sharing, Dean, it looks hideous. And yet, we do trade it, don't we? We trade the fountain of living water for broken cisterns that can hold no water.

And maybe you're sitting here tonight and God's laying His finger on your heart and saying you are the One. You're the One. It is an issue in your life.

And you need to do some business with God tonight. And I'd like to open it up again tonight, open up the altar, invite you if you have business to do with God and you want an opportunity just to humble yourself before God and stand up and say, I'm a needy man. That hit me in my life.

And I'm going to do something about it tonight. I'm going to cut down the asteroth tonight. I'm stepping out in faith.

Then I'd invite you to come as we sing a song. Brother Eldon? Let's turn to number 264. Number 264.

Amen. Christ has no place in Heaven But on the whole world If He must flee We'd like to hear Him cry Followed with death on Calvary Your symphonies on Gloria in excelsis Deo Sweet life to you we cry Followed with death on Your symphonies on Maybe you're sitting here and you have no choice. The Lord Jesus Christ came to give you a worship that is so much the higher, so much the purer, that is fitted for your very soul.

A worship for which you were created. A yoke that fits well. You don't have to be laying your children on the altar of Moloch anymore.

It begins with a step of faith that says, I believe it. I believe there's something better for me. I believe that this man, Jesus Christ, is who He said He was.

And I'm willing to accept Him. I'm willing to accept His offer of life. I'm going to let go of that idolatry, all the things I've known, my father taught me, my mother taught me, all those things, and I'm going to accept the Kingdom of God in my life.

I encourage you, if you're sitting here tonight and you've never made a step like that, would you step out today? Just step out of your seat tonight and come down here and ask for help. There are many who would love to speak with you. Verse 3, brother.

While not the world is in its strife, there's Jesus good and true. O come, sing praise to Christ, your light. He reigneth God for you.

While not the world is Jesus' plea, sweet life to you, we cry. Alone with death on Calvary, your sinless soul we sigh. Love not the world through your joys above, all earthly pains transcend.

In Jesus' mood we die, O love. We, sweet life to you, we cry. O Christian here, there's a reward for those that escape and overcome the world and shed it and avoid it, unstained by it.

There's a reward for you. I wonder if we couldn't say at the end of John for Christians here, that if there's a Christian here that is in idolatry, little children, purge yourself from idols. Isn't that what the Apostle Paul was saying? Little children, purge yourself from idols.

You could do it tonight. You could come and purge yourself from idols. Love not the world, O Christian here, inciting words inferred.

Shall on your holy ground appear these hymns of love, the world. Love not the world, in Jesus' mood, sweet life to you, we cry. Your sin-lost soul, we cry.

Thank You, Lord Jesus, for seeking our sin-lost souls. I don't have to worship Malak and the lusts of my flesh.

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