

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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What Will Happen To The Next Generation? (Part 5)

Judges 2:8-15

We finished last month considering the Following of the Posterity. Our last thought concerned The Object of that following. The first god mentioned was Baal; the second was the female counterpart, Ashtaroth. The Israelites forsook the true God for these man-made, often hand-made, gods. But there is something else that we must consider. A clause in verse 12 vividly stands out in my mind. It says they followed *“the gods of the people that were round about them.”* Sadly, the people of Israel did not want to be distinct and different from the people around them. That is what God wanted and expected, but this generation no longer wanted to be different.

God gave His laws to Moses on Mount Sinai. Many of those laws gave important distinctions in how God wanted to be worshiped. These were essential in distinguishing the worship of the Israelites from the worship of the heathen nations around them. Other laws covered different aspects of living. Some even covered dietary regulations. These were essential in distinguishing the normal life and practice of the Israelites from the normal life of the heathen nations. It was not enough for the Israelites to be different in their worship, God wanted them to be different in every aspect of their life. In Leviticus 18:21-30, God describes some sins that the other nations had committed. Among these are child sacrifice, homosexuality, and bestiality. God says plainly, *“Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations”* (18:26). God wanted the Israelites to be different. He would sum up all of the details in Leviticus with one short sentence in 11:45, *“Ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.”* God held the standard high, and He expected the Israelites to meet His standard.

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Sadly, the Israelites failed miserably. If it had been some of the so-called “minor” laws, we might not think it was so bad. But they broke some of the major laws of God. Here in this passage, they worshiped false gods. Why did they do that? The text says that they were the gods of the people that were round about them. They wanted to be like the other nations. They did not want to be different. They wanted to be like the Philistines, the Amorites, the Hittites, and everyone else. They no longer cared to be God’s special chosen people. They saw what the other people were doing, and they wanted to follow them and be just like them. Exactly who started this trend and how it was started, we have no idea. I wonder who brought up the thought, “Let’s worship the gods of the other nations.” When the suggestion was made, I wonder if anyone opposed it and said, “We cannot do that; it is wrong.” Or was the nation so far removed from God that no one cared? Or did some feel that it was wrong and were too afraid to say anything? These are questions that cannot be answered. We do not know who started the idolatry, or who may have opposed it. In Judges, the Scripture just records the fact that they wanted to be like everyone else. Everyone else—what is so special about that? Would it not be better to want to be like God? Should we not want to be obedient to Him, even if it makes us different from those around us? Israel would have been better off to have decided to be obedient to God, no matter how different it made them look.

There are striking parallels between Israel and our Fundamental, Independent Baptist churches of today. While we may not be involved in idolatry, we are still violating God’s laws. We like to comfort ourselves in the fact that we have not broken the “major laws” of God. But we are violating the clear teaching of Scripture. We may not consider them “major,” but God gave the commands, and He expects us to follow them. By the way, our rejection of God’s commands are leading us down the pathway to complete and total abandonment of what is right in Scripture. Our rejection of God’s Word, and our lack of obedience to it, has allowed the people around us to increase in their lawlessness. No one would argue that our

society is in worse shape than it was years ago. We like to blame the world, but the world is not the cause of it. The cause is the rejection of God's clear teaching by those who want to claim the name of God.

Do you want an example of a clear teaching of Scripture that has been rejected by the vast majority of our Fundamental, Independent Baptist churches? I Peter 1:15-16 says, "*But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*" Do you know any churches that desire to obey this command from God Himself? How many are there? How many pastors and evangelists preach holiness from their pulpits today? How many church members desire to practice holiness in their daily lives? Let us get even more personal. Do you practice holiness in your life? Is everything that you do in your life pleasing to God?

We will make up every excuse for why that does not apply to us. We will say that certain areas do not really matter to God. Is that so? Is that your opinion, or is that what God says? I know what God expects of His people. Again, I Peter 1:15 says that we are to be holy in "*all manner of conversation.*" What does that mean? The word conversation is not just referring to our speech, as we use the word today. The Scriptural meaning refers to every aspect of our life. What does God expect of us? He expects everything that we do to be holy. What we see, what we say, what we hear, what we do, where we go—everything is to be holy. What is the measuring stick? How holy are we to be? We are to be—everything that we do is to be—as holy as God.

Some will say, "Preacher, that is too much." It must not be. That is what God said. I Peter 1:16 says, "*Be ye holy; for I am holy.*" The reason God expects us to be holy is because He is holy. And because He is holy, He wants His people to be holy in their practice. This is not the only passage that talks about God's expectation. You can read about it in just about every New Testament book. If you do not believe me, get a Bible concordance and search out the words holy,

holiness, separation, and sanctification. You will then discover on your own what God expects.

But how has this affected this current generation? We no longer practice holiness in our lives. Where preachers once preached against going to the movies, watching bad things on television, drinking alcohol, committing adultery and fornication, listening to worldly music, and so on, we do not hear anything preached against any more. I was thinking the other day about this. Other than times when I have preached about it, I do not recall any preacher in recent memory preaching against drinking alcohol. Adultery and fornication is rampant in our society, but where are the condemnations of this from our pulpit.

We have changed our preaching from Scriptural preaching, which will often be preaching against sin, to positive preaching that makes people feel good. Why have we done this? Because we want to be like the world. We are afraid of the repercussions, so we have changed our preaching. The people in the pew no longer want to be different from the people in the world, so we no longer care to practice holiness in our lives. It has come to the point, as it has so often been said, that you can no longer tell the difference between the world and the church. Go into some of the churches that we go into. To some it may not seem a big thing, but the people dress no differently than the world. We used to wear our "Sunday best" to church. Everyone had special clothes for Sunday. They did not wear to church what they wore out in the field. But now no one cares. There is no respect for the house of God. They wear anything to church, even if it is immodest. Why? Because they want to be like everyone else. Church members listen to the same music that the world listens to? Why? Because they want to be like the world. Some are even bringing the music of the world into the church. Why? Because they want to be like the world. We must reject that idea. We must not be like those around us! We must be like God! We must desire to be holy!

Notice the second thought about the Following of the Posterity. It is The Obedience. This has come up as we considered The Object, but ponder what these Israelites did as they worshiped these false gods. Was it just a partial following of the idols, and a partial rejection of God? Sadly, it was not. Judges 2:12 says, “*And bowed themselves unto them.*” The word bowed means “to depress; to prostrate; to fall down flat; to humbly beseech; to do reverence; to worship.” This was not some half-hearted worship. The Israelites went wholeheartedly after these false gods. Instead of falling down on their faces before the true God as their parents and forefathers had, they were falling down before gods that they had made. These gods had no power. They had no eyes to see and no ears to hear. But the Israelites were worshiping them anyway.

As a whole, this generation has forsaken the true God. We are worshiping the god of materialism. We want possessions. God said to seek Him first, and He would take care of us. We must return to worshiping God and rejecting the world.