

make their own gods. The plea of the Lord that follows is one of remembrance. "Remember thy redeemer!" "I have found you." This is the concept of the jealousy of God. Knowing that any rival deity will simply ruin us, God holds us to Himself and says "Honor my worship!" ... "Do not degrade me with the presence of false or wicked idols."

That we might see the seriousness of this, the Lord reveals some personal traits of the Divine Being. He does not overlook easily the sins of the fathers but visits them on those who hate him unto the third or fourth generation. This is an important point. You cannot look up today and say that God is charging you with the sins of your forebears, unless you are hating Him. If you hate God there is a sense in which the cumulative sins of the past hover over you and that is a fearsome thing. But if you love Him you are spared any such thought or worry. The expression "third or fourth generation" is not intended literally but is a Hebrew speech device meaning simply that there is no end to God's capacity to judge for the sin of infidelity.

On the other hand, mercy is showed to thousands without limitation on those who love God. The proof of their love is in the fact that they honor His law and keep His commandments. It is one of the great truths that love of God is more than words. Israel often professed to love God while its heart was far from Him. The proof is obedience. Keeping the commands is an occupation when we love God and a test of the reality of love. Failure to honor God's worship is not just a minor point in slightly deviant behaviour. It is to invite God's judgment, to place ourselves in an area of harm and to become self-contradictory in values.

The Service of the particular law.

As we have noted, Israel often failed in the observance of this law