

**BAAL
OR
BAALIM
WORSHIP**

By Rodney W. Francis

BAAL WORSHIP

Cover designed by Jean Francis.



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BAAL WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

All over the world, in all cultures, there is a revival of interest in the spirit world. Some of what is happening is very good. Scores of people are seeking and finding the Christian message with a new life and zeal they have never known before. God's Holy Spirit is being poured out in increasing measure upon a world that desperately needs His goodness experienced in reality. Multitudes are being swept into the Kingdom of God, which is bringing love, joy, peace, forgiveness and power in a beautiful way.

But, sadly, scores of people worldwide are also seeking the evil side of the spirit world, being deceived into seeking the temporary pleasures of power, wealth and the sexual partner(s) of one's own desire. This is the great bait of the occult realm, offering the pleasures of the flesh, without warning of the end result.

The spirit realm is nothing new. It has been in existence since before man was created in the beginning. Because the spirit realm is more powerful than the physical, then, the spirit of spirits that people give themselves over to, eventually dominate their lives - for good or evil.

This book is about Baal Worship. Baal is a type of Satan, the ruling king of darkness, who seeks to captivate, seduce, deceive and finally dominate those who fall to his temptations.

As you will see, the Bible has much to say about the activities of the devil and how he worked at ruining God's people, Israel, in the Old Testament. Today he is working overtime to bring down the human race, to stop them from allowing Jesus Christ becoming Lord of their lives.

May this information help you to see how subtle our enemy is.

– *Rodney W. Francis.*

CHAPTER ONE

IN THIS STUDY we shall seek to reveal some of the strategies of Baal, discover who he is and how he works.

WHO IS BAAL, OR BAALIM?

The name means "master, possessor (Young's)"; a master, a husband, or owner" (Strong's); or "the lord (as master, owner)".

He is "the chief male deity of the Phoenicians and Canaanites, as "Ashtoreth" was their chief female deity. Both these names have the peculiarity of being used in the plural, and of **always** having the definite article prefixed, e.g. the Baalim" (Young's).

"Baal" is a Hebrew word which is translated into English in the Old Testament the following ways (the number of times in brackets): be husband (3), be married (1), have dominion (1), have dominion over (1), marry (4), married (1), married wife (1), wife (1), be married (2), captain (1), chief man (1), husband (11), lord (2), man (26), master (5), owner (14), and person (1) (Young's).

The spirit of Baal wants to join itself to us and rule over us. "Baal" is referred to mainly in the Scriptures as "***an idol of the Phoenicians and Tyrians.***" The Baal is also a city in the tribe of Simeon (1 Chronicles 4:33); a descendant of Reuben, B.C. 1300 (1 Chronicles 5:5), and a descendant of Benjamin, B.C. 1180 (1 Chronicles 8:30 and 9:36). (Young's).

According to Unger's Bible Dictionary, "Baal" is the "common Canaanite word for "master, lord." He was one of the chief male deities of the Canaanite pantheon ("all the gods collectively of a religion; a temple to all the gods"), now well known from the religious epic literature discovered at Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit of the Amarna Letters) from 1921-1937. Baal was the son of El, the father of the gods and the head of the Canaanite pantheon, according to the tablets from Ugarit ("an ancient Syrian city state, now known as Ras Shamra"). He is also designated as "the son of

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Dagon (Hebrew "dagon" meaning "grain, corn, wheat"), an ancient Canaanite and Mesopotamian deity associated with agriculture. Baal was thus the farm god who gave increase to family and field, flocks and herds. He was likewise identified with the storm-god Hadad whose voice could be heard in the reverberating thunder that accompanied rain, which was so necessary for the success of the crops.

CANAANITE WORSHIP:

The inhabitants of Canaan were addicted to Baal worship, which was conducted by priests in temples, and, in good weather, outdoors in fields and particularly on hilltops called "high places." The cult included animal sacrifice, ritualistic meals, and licentious ("sexually unrestrained or promiscuous" – Collins') dances. Near the rock altar was a sacred pillar or "massebah," and close by the symbol of the "asherah," both of which apparently symbolized human fertility. High places had chambers for sacred prostitution by male prostitutes (kedishim) and sacred harlots (kedeshoth) . . .

"For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree."

"And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel" (1 Kings 14:23-24).

"And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the Lord where the women wove hangings for the grove" (2 Kings 23:7).

". . .The gaiety and licentious character of Baal worship always had a subtle attraction for the austere Hebrews, bound to serve a Holy God under a rigorous moral code."

CHAPTER TWO

BAAL NAMES:

IN TIMES OF LAPSE Hebrews compounded the names of their children with Baal – for example, Jerub Baal (Judges 7:1), Esh-baal (1 Chronicles 8:33, 9:39); Merib-baal (1 Chronicles 8:34; 9:40) which in times of revival and return to Yahwism (“Jehovah God”) were altered, the “Baal” element being replaced by “bosheth”, meaning shame.” Thus pious Israelites express their horror of Baal worship; examples are Jerubbesheth (for Jerubbaal) (2 Samuel 11:21), Ish-bosheth (for Ishbaal) (2 Samuel 2:8), Mephibosheth (for Merribbaal) (2 Samuel 4:4; 9:6,10).

Numerous place names also occur, such as Baal-gad (“lord of good fortune,” Joshua 11:17), Baal-hamon (“lord of wealth,” Song of Solomon 8:11), Baal-hazor (“Baal’s village,” 2 Samuel 13:23), Baal-meon (“lord of the dwelling,” Numbers 32:38), Baal-peor (“lord of the opening,” Deuteronomy 4:3), Baal-tamar (“lord of the palm tree,” Judges 20:33) and others.

Baal-berith – (“lord of the covenant”). Under this title the great N.W. Semitic weather god Baal was worshipped at Shechem after the death of Gideon . . .”

“And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring (“committed fornication”) after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god”(Judges 8:33; 9:4).

“. . . Occasionally he was spoken of as El-berith, “the god of covenant” (Judges 9:46). The Canaanites were brought into the Israelite fold by treaty, conquest or gradual absorption. . .”

Baalim – (plural of Baal). This is a general term not including images of Baal but various concepts of the god. There were numerous Baalim as Baal-shamem (“lord of

BAAL WORSHIP

heaven") of the Phoenicians (Phoenicia was an ancient maritime country extending from the Mediterranean Sea to the Lebanon Mountains; they were leading traders) and Palmyraeans (Palmyra was an ancient city in central Syria: Biblical name is Tadmor); Baal-Melkart of the Tyrians (Tyre is a port in S. Lebanon, on the Mediterranean: for centuries a major Phoenician seaport); Baal-Saphon of the Canaanites of Ugarit.

Baal-peor – A Moabite (Moab was the son of Lot and his elder daughter – incest) deity worshipped on the summit of Mt. Peor with immoral rites. The name is probably another form of Chemosh ["fire, hearth" – Chemosh was the national deity of the Moabites, honoured with terribly cruel rites like those of Molech ("counsellor, king" – also called Milcom, Malcam, and Malcan), to whom children were sacrificed in the fire]. The Israelites were seduced into the immorality of this licentious worship in the Plains of Moab" (end of quote from Unger's):

"And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

And Israel joined ("coupled, yoked" – Young's) himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel.

And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor.

And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought into his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand;

And he went after the man of Israel unto the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.

And those that died in the plague were twenty and four

thousand" (Numbers 25:1-9).

"They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor; and ate the sacrifices of the dead.

Thus they provoked Him (God) to anger with their inventions ("deeds"): and the plague brake in upon them.

Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment, and so the plague was stayed" (Psalm 106:28-30).

"I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baal-peor; and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved" (Hosea 9:10).

From the above Scriptures we see what happens when people disobey the Lord's commandment:

- 1) They began to commit whoredom ("fornication") openly.
- 2) They gathered to watch the sacrificing unto false gods.
- 3) They partook by eating sacrifices offered to the dead.
- 4) They bowed down to Baal. (They came under his dominion by acknowledging he had power over them.)
- 5) They joined themselves unto Baal-peor ("lord of the opening").
- 6) They loved their abominations.

The result of these things brought about:

- 1) The anger of the Lord.
- 2) The plague ("a pestilence, affliction, or calamity on a large scale especially when regarded as sent by God – Collins') brake in on them.
- 3) Phinehas executed a judgment upon two committing whoredom that stayed the plague.
- 4) Nevertheless 24,000 people died as a result of the plague.

Baal worship always leads to a releasing of the anger of God.

BAAL WORSHIP

Baal worship leads to death!
Let's return to Unger's Bible Dictionary:

Baal-zebub – "the form of the name of Baal as worshipped at the Philistine (Philistia was an ancient country on the coast of S.W. Palestine) city of Ekron."

Baal, under this aspect of worship, was viewed as the producer of flies and hence able to control this pest, so common in the East . . . A New Testament rendering of the name of Beelzebul (Revised Standard Version). Beelzebub means "lord of the (heavenly) habitation!" The Pharisees called Beelzebub (Beelzebul) the "prince of the demons."

"But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, this fellow does not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of devils"(Matthew 12:24).

". . . Our Lord denied that He expelled demons by the power of Beelzebub:

"If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? Because you say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges.

But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

When a strong man armed keeps his palace, his goods are in peace:

But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he takes from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divides his spoils.

He that is not with Me is against Me: and he that gathers not with Me scatters.

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walks through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

And when he comes, he finds it swept and garnished ("to order, set in order, adorn, garnish, prepare" – Bullinger's).

Then goes he, and takes to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first"(Luke 11:18-26).

Jesus recognised the reality of Satan and Baal worship amongst the Jews!

“. . . It is a matter of divine revelation that demons are the dynamic of idolatry:–

"What say I then? That the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?"

But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils.

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: you cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (1 Corinthians 10:21).

Many of the Jews from the period of the restoration and down through New Testament times believed that heathen deities were demons. The heathen deities were, of course, nothing, but behind them were evil spirits or demons energizing their worship" (end of quote, from Unger's).

Collins' English Dictionary gives us the meaning of "Baal" as:

- 1) "Any of several ancient Semitic fertility gods.
- 2) Phoenician mythology: the sun god and supreme national deity.
- 3) Any false god or idol."

"Semitic" means:–

- 1) "A branch or subfamily of the Afro-Asiatic family of languages that includes Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic, Amharic, and such ancient languages as Akkadian and Phoenician.
- 2) Denoting, relating to, or belonging to this group of languages.
- 3) Denoting, belonging to, or characteristic of any of the peoples speaking a Semitic language, especially the Jews or the Arabs.
- 4) Another word for Jewish" (Collins').

BAAL WORSHIP IS ANTI THE TRUE GOD

We see from the previous statements that Baal represents a heathen lifestyle. Baal is of the devil and he subtly uses the world (coveting success in harvesting, finances, etc.) and the flesh (unfaithfulness to God's order leading to immorality) to

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deceive people into serving him (evil spirit involvement).

It seems that each time the children of Israel disobeyed or turned their backs on God, they fell into evil and Baal worship.

For example:–

"And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim:

And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who 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.

And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtoreth.

And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of spoilers* ("plunderers, robbers; people who cause corruption" – Collins) ***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" (Judges 2:11-14).**

Here we see:

- 1) God's people did evil in God's sight.
- 2) They served Baalim. That is, they wilfully chose to replace their service to God Almighty by giving themselves to serve Baal. By doing that they demonstrated their utter disrespect to generations of Godly knowledge and teachings.
- 3) They served many false gods; gave allegiance to them.

The result was:

- 1) The anger of the Lord was hot against them.
- 2) He gave them over to their lusts.
- 3) They could no longer stand in victory over their enemies. Baal worship made them into weak slaves.

Let's divert here again to Unger's Bible Dictionary and look at:

ASHTAROTH (OR ASHTORETH)

Ashtoreth is the chief female deity of the Phoenicians and Canaanites – a Canaanite goddess. "In south Arabic the name is found as "Athtar" (apparently from "athara, to be fertile, to irrigate"), a god identified with the planet Venus. The name is cognate ("akin; related by blood or descended from a common maternal ancestor – Collins") with Babylonian Ishtar ("the principal goddess of the Babylonians and Assyrians") the goddess of sensual love, maternity and fertility. Licentious worship was conducted in honour of her. As Asherah and Anat of Ras Shamra she was the patroness of war as well as sex, and sometimes identified with these goddesses Ashtoreth worship was early entrenched at Sidon (1 Kings 11:5,33; 2 Kings 23:13). Her polluting cult even presented a danger to early Israel (Judges 2:13; 10:6)" (end of quote from Unger's) . . .

"And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim and Ashtoreth ("wife"), and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not Him.

And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon.

And that year they vexed ("crushed") and oppressed the children of Israel: eighteen years . . ." (Judges 10:6-9).

SOLOMON SUCCUMBED TO ASHTORETH!

King Solomon succumbed to her voluptuous ("relating to, characterized by, or consisting of pleasures of the body or senses; sensual; disposed, devoted, or addicted to sensual indulgence or luxurious pleasures; provocative and sexually alluring" – Collins) worship:–

"But King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;

Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, You shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave ("adhered to") unto these in love.

And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines (“women who live with men as man and wife but not married to that person – de factos”): ***and his wives turned away his heart.***

For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom (same as Molech) ***the abomination of the Ammonite. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father.***

Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh (“fire, hearth” – for child sacrifices!), ***the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech*** (same as Milcom), ***the abomination of the children of Ammon.***

And likewise did he (Solomon) ***for all his strange wives, who burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.***

And the Lord was angry with Solomon . . . Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of you, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant... And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite . . . And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon . . .”

(Then the prophet Ahijah prophesied) . . . ***“for thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon . . .***

Because that they have forsaken Me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways” (1 Kings 11:1-33). (See also 2 Kings 23:13-14).

This passage of Scripture shows us Baal is no respecter of persons – even Solomon succumbed to his lures:–

- 1) Solomon specifically disobeyed God by getting involved with women God told him not to.
- 2) Solomon not only disobeyed but he loved many strange

("foreign, non-relative, adulterous, different, outlandish" – Strong's) women.

- 3) They swept him off his feet! He had 1,000 of them!
- 4) Those women turned away his heart from God.
- 5) Those women turned his heart toward other gods - heathen gods.
- 6) Solomon did evil in the sight of God.
- 7) He assisted his women in their Baal worship. He even built a high place for Chemosh, knowing that it would be used to sacrifice children to appease his wives' evil gods!

This brought about:

- 1) The anger of God.
- 2) Adversaries sent by God.
- 3) The promise of the rending of the kingdom from Solomon.

If King Solomon, one of the wisest men in the earth in his day, could be tempted and deceived into Baal worship – how much more should we beware today??!!

MORE EXAMPLES OF ISRAEL'S EVIL – TURNING THEM TO BAAL DEMONIC WORSHIP

"And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites:

And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves.

Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He sold them . . ."(Judges 3:5-8).

". . . We have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord, and have served Baalim and Ashtoreth . . ."(1 Samuel 12:10).

"And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him.

And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel ("without cohabitation" or "unchaste") the daughter

of Ethbaal ("with Baal or Baal's man") ***king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.***

And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

And Ahab made a grove (Hebrew word is "asherah" meaning "a shrine"); ***and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him***" (1 Kings 16:30-33).

Let's look at King Ahab's rebellion against God in sequence:—

- 1) He married Jezebel, an evil, unfaithful woman. Jezebel was steeped in Baal worship – the Zidonians (her father Eth-baal was king!) adored Baal and Ashtoreth as their invested guardians and protectors. It was Solomon's sin (1 Kings 11) which opened the door for Israel's kings to marry Zidonian women!
- 2) Jezebel's influence soon had Ahab rebelling against God and bowing down to the evil spirits inherent in her.
- 3) Ahab built an altar to Baal, which was an open mockery of God by an Israeli king. It was wilful rebellion against the commandments of the God of Israel. This altar was in the house of Baal. That which was "taboo" and out of bounds to him became a place of fellowship and service!
- 4) Ahab built a shrine. He publicly defied God and worshipped the god of the world, the flesh and the devil.

WHAT DID BAAL WORSHIP ENTAIL?

When Elijah was sent to God to bring judgment upon Israel for Ahab and Jezebel's sin, we read of his challenge to Ahab after 3 1/2 years of drought that brought the nation to its knees. Elijah then challenged the prophets of Baal to prove their god (1 Kings 18) by calling down fire from heaven. They accepted the challenge but were hopelessly deceived. But we do learn something of what is involved in Baal worship.

- 1) They believed Baal was alive and real (which was a deception).
- 2) They believed Baal could and would answer by fire (deception).
- 3) They believed in prayer!

- 4) They believed Baal would hear and answer their prayers and give them the miracle they needed!
- 5) They believed in making sacrifices to Baal (animal and human!)
- 6) They believed in having an altar to Baal (they even jumped on it to get closer to him).
- 7) They cut themselves with knives and lancets ("darts, javelins and spears") – so much so that they were covered in their own blood.

Satanic ritualism still does this today – the devil trying to make a mockery of Jesus shedding His blood to cleanse mankind by driving sinful man to try and atone for his own sin!

People today who cut themselves are under the influence of evil spirits. Most do not feel any pain when they do this – the devil being very crafty. When those evil things are commanded to go and the person is free there will be real pain, especially if the spirits are cast out straight after the cutting is done.

- 8) They prophesied. There was a counterfeit manifestation of the gifts of God the Holy Spirit. They spoke out prophetic words under the influence of an evil spirit – all to no avail. (see Jeremiah 2:8 – ***"the prophets prophesied by Baal . . ."***) While all this was going on Elijah, mocked them, for he knew the power of God was with him and Baal could not answer by fire.

Let's see from the Living Bible what Elijah had to say to those deluded idol worshippers of Baal:

"Then Elijah turned to the prophets of Baal. "You first," he said "for there are many of you; choose one of the bulls and prepare it and call to your god; but don't put any fire under the wood."

So they prepared one of the young bulls and placed it on the altar; and they called to Baal all morning, shouting, "O Baal, hear us!" But there was no reply of any kind. Then they began to dance around the altar.

"About noontime, Elijah began mocking them. "You'll have to shout louder than that," he scoffed, "to catch the attention of your god!"

Perhaps he is talking to someone, or is out sitting on the toilet, or maybe he is away on a trip, or is asleep and needs to be wakened!"

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So they shouted louder and, as was their custom, cut themselves with knives and swords until the blood gushed out.

They raved all afternoon until the time of the evening sacrifice, but there was no reply, no voice, no answer” (1 Kings 18:25-29 TLB.).

Other aspects of Baal worship include:–

- 1) Good luck for prosperity (rain to water the crops to give a fruitful harvest).
- 2) No sexual restraints.
- 3) Idolatry.
- 4) Ancestral worship.
- 5) Deception – the deception of it all leads people to a lifestyle of rebellion and lawlessness against God.
- 6) Judgment – The end result for Baal and Ashtoreth worshippers is judgment, death and destruction. Elijah slew the prophets of Baal in his day (1 Kings 18:40).

MORE SINFUL KINGS

Ahaziah (“possessed of Jehovah; Jah holds”):

Ahaziah, Ahab’s son reigned over Israel – but – like his father and mother, he served Baal:

“And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin:

For he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the Lord God of Israel, according to all that his father had done” (1 Kings 22:52-53).

We see the trend continue in the reign of King Hoshea (“to save Jah is help”):

“And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord . . . For

so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods,

And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city” (2 Kings 17:1-9).

Notice how the cities were conquered from within rather than from without; the watchmen were watching to keep the enemy out and the city was fenced to do the same, but the enemy was within their ranks because of their sin against God. Satan feeds on that and often destroys God’s people from within.

”And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree:

And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the Lord carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger:

For they served idols, whereof the Lord had said unto them, You shall not do this thing.

Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.

Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God.

And they rejected His statutes, and His covenant that He made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them, that they should not do like them.

And they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a

grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven and served Baal.

And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination (“the art, practice, or gift of discerning or discovering future events or unknown things, as though by supernatural powers; a false prophecy – Collins’) ***and enchantments*** (“casting spells; bewitch; to chant a magic spell or act of witchcraft – Collins’), ***and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger.***

Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only”(2 Kings 17:10-23).

- 1) Israel sinned and did evil against the Lord.
- 2) They secretly served Baal.
- 3) They feared other gods.
- 4) They walked in the teachings of the heathen.
- 5) They brought back into their lives what God had thrown out.
- 6) They built high places to Baal.
- 7) They set up images and groves, and burnt incense there.
- 8) They served idols.
- 9) They did wicked things.
- 10) They refused to listen to God’s Word.
- 11) They hardened their necks (rebellion).
- 12) They rejected God’s ways.
- 13) They became vain.
- 14) They worshipped the host of heaven. (See further on in this study).
- 15) They used divination and enchantments.
- 16) They sacrificed the lives of their sons and daughters unto these evil

gods.

This resulted in:

- 1) God's anger against them.
- 2) Banishment – He removed them out of His sight.

King Ahaz ("possessor: he holds") was another evil leader:

"Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: but he did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord, like David his father: For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim. Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. He sacrificed also and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

Wherefore the Lord his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter.

For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, who were all valiant men; because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers" (2 Chronicles 28:1-6).

Again we see something of the terrible demands of Baal (satanic) worship:–

- 1) Ahaz followed the wickedness of those before him.
- 2) He made molten images of Baalim.
- 3) He burnt incense unto Baal.
- 4) Worse than that, he burnt his children in the fire – child sacrifices unto the devil!

God's response was:

BAAL WORSHIP

- 1) He delivered Ahaz into the captivity of another king.
- 2) There was a great slaughter of 120,000 people. God's judgment upon evil was clearly seen.

CHAPTER THREE

JEREMIAH EXPOSED BAAL WORSHIP IN GOD'S PEOPLE

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH had a bit to say about God's people being defeated through their turning to Baal worship. Let me share some of his words:-

The priests, pastors and prophets:

"Moreover the Word of the Lord came to me, saying, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus says the Lord; I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your espousals ("a marriage or betrothal ceremony"), when you went after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.

Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the firstfruits of His increase: all that devour Him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, says the Lord.

Hear ye the Word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel;

Thus says the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in Me, that they are gone far from Me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?

Neither said they, Where is the Lord that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?

BAAL WORSHIP

And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when you entered, you defiled My land, and made Mine heritage an abomination.

The priests said not, Where is the Lord? And they that handle the law knew Me not: the pastors also transgressed against Me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit” (Jeremiah 2:1-8). (See also Jeremiah 2:19-37).

What a tragedy!

What a way for God’s people to treat their Mighty Saviour!

But is human nature any different today?

Many are still turning away from God into Baal worship, in spite of everything He has done for us.

Take time to meditate on the loving, pleading heart of the Lord toward us again in this passage:

“Behold, you trust in lying words, that cannot profit.

Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom you know not;

And come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?” (Jeremiah 7:8-10).

Christianity is not a “liberty licence” to do as we please – it is living to please Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

“Who is the wise man that may understand this? And who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord has spoken, that he may declare it, for that the land perishes and is burned up like a wilderness, that none passes through?

And the Lord says, Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice, neither walked therein;

But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them: Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts (“warfare, service”) the God of Israel;

Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.

I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them”(Jeremiah 9:12-16).

Disobedience to God comes about through forsaking His Word, walking in the imagination of our own hearts, listening to the advice handed down from ungodly forefathers – and Baal worship. It always brings about the destruction of God’s people! No one can fight against God and win! But mankind keeps trying because he is living under the Baalim curse by serving the world (represented by covetousness, greed and selfishness), the flesh (immoral thoughts and lifestyles, idolatry) and the devil (occultish practices, witchcraft, secret societies, Satanism, etc., which all work through fear, manipulation, domination, lawlessness and rebellion to prevent Jesus Christ from being **THE LORD of our life**).

In Jeremiah 11 we see the same message of destruction to God’s people because of their evil in worshipping Baal:

“Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;

And you say unto them, Thus says the Lord God of Israel; Cursed be the man that obeys not the words of this covenant,

Which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey My voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall you be My people, and I will be your God . . .

For I earnestly protested (“demanding serious attention”) ***unto your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey My voice.***

Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do; but they did them not.

And the Lord said unto me, A conspiracy (“a secret plan or agreement to carry out an illegal or harmful act; a plot” – Collins’) ***is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They are turned back to the iniquities*** (“wickedness, injustice; perverseness”) ***of their forefathers, who refused to hear***

My words; and they went after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers.

Therefore thus says the Lord, Behold I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they cry unto Me, I will not hearken unto them.

***Then shall the cities of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem go, and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense: but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble* ("bad or evil, wickedness, wretchedness, wrong" – Strong's).**

For according to the number of your cities were your gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have you set up altars to that shameful* ("unworthy, dishonourable, degrading, scandalous") ***thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal.**

For the Lord of hosts, that planted you, has pronounced evil against you, for the evil of the house of Israel and of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke* ("make angry; infuriate; incite") ***Me to anger in offering incense unto Baal"(Jeremiah 11:1-17).**

In this passage we have just read we see what their disobedience to God caused in the people:-

- 1) The curse of God (verse 3).
- 2) Deafness of hearing God (verse 8).
- 3) They walked in the imagination of their evil heart (verse 8).
- 4) Conspiracy (verse 9).
- 5) A returning to the wickedness of their forefathers (verse 10).
- 6) A refusing to hear God's Word (verse 10) (wilful rebellion).
- 7) They wilfully went after other gods to serve them (verse 10).
- 8) They wilfully broke God's covenant (verse 10).
- 9) They burnt incense to Baal (verse 12,13,17).
- 10) They multiplied the numbers of their gods (verse 13).

- 11) They set up altars to Baal, a shameful thing (verse 13).
- 12) They rejoiced in their evil (verse 15).
- 13) They pronounced evil against themselves (verse 17).
- 14) They provoked God to anger! (verse 17).

God said they would know trouble as a result of their turning to Baal worship. God Himself would bring evil upon them and they would not be able to escape it! (verse 11). He would not answer their prayers when they cry in the midst of their troubles (verse 14). Let us be reminded that God always has the final say in our lives. **It pays to OBEY!**

". . . Hear ye the Word of the Lord, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever hears, his ears shall tingle.

Because they have forsaken Me, and have estranged ("to antagonise or lose the affection of, i.e. someone previously friendly; alienate; to treat as a stranger" – Collins') ***this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah*** (instead of faith in God they put their faith in the devil!), ***and filled this place with the blood of innocents;***

They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it; neither came it into My mind" (Jeremiah 19:3-5).

Here we see the delusion and slaughter that Baal worship demands:

- 1) They burned incense to new, strange gods.
- 2) They brought about the slaughter of innocent people, non Baal worshippers.
- 3) They built altars to Baal so that they could offer their sons to Baal as living sacrifices. This was to find favour with the gods of Baalim - Christians know these gods are lying demons from the pit of hell. Remember Solomon? That wise man lost God out of his life when he allowed evil women to turn his heart to Baal. He likewise built an altar so children could be sacrificed to the devil! (1 Kings 11:1-11).

Let's move on in the book of Jeremiah:

"My heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine has overcome, because of the Lord, and because of the words of His holiness.

For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourns; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force ("might") is not right.

For both the prophet and the priest are profane ("to be defiled, polluted, corrupted"); yes, in My house have I found their wickedness, says the Lord.

Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation (time of judgment), says the Lord.

And I have seen folly ("madness, evil, wickedness, lewdness; wantonness") in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused My people Israel to err.

I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evil-doers, that none does return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto Me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah . . ." (Jeremiah 23:9-14).

The word "folly" in verse 13 above, which is used to describe the prophets of Samaria, is explained here in greater meaning: "anything that is not rightly mixed, applied to unsavoury meats, untempered mortar, and indiscreet speeches; in a moral or metaphorical sense, that which has no salt of reason, righteousness, justice, or equity in it; that which is done beside, without, or against all these; unsavouries, something silly, foolish, and even impious" – (Wilson's).

The Church is in real trouble when her prophets are described like that!

"Am I a God at hand, says the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? says the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? says the Lord.

I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in My name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.

How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that

prophesy lies? Yes they are prophets of the deceit ("to deceive, probably to cast down, to make fall; fraud" – Wilson's) ***of their own heart;***

Who think to cause My people to forget My name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten My Name for Baal . . ." (Jeremiah 23:23-27).

In Jeremiah 23 we see the tragedy that takes place when God's leaders get away from the truth. Pastors and prophets have an awesome responsibility to keep close to God. In Israel's day, time and again it was the leaders who turned to Baal worship, which eventually brought the wrath and judgment of God upon the nation.

It was because of Israel's wickedness in serving Baal that Nebuchadnezzar was able to overthrow her and keep in captivity for so long:—

"Then came the Word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying,

Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for Me?

Therefore thus says the Lord; Behold I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it:

And the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink offerings unto other gods, to provoke Me to anger.

For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before Me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked Me to anger with the work of their hands, says the Lord.

For this city has been to Me as a provocation of My anger and of My fury from the day that they built it even unto this day; that I should remove it from before My face,

Because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke Me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

And they have turned unto Me the back, and not the face:

though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction.

But they set their abominations in the house, which is called by My Name, to defile it.

And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into My mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin”(Jeremiah 32:26-35).

The downward path into evil abominations is again clearly seen. Always tied up in this is Baal worship.

Hosea 13:1 puts it all into a nutshell for us:

“When Ephraim (“doubly fruitful”) spake trembling (with humility), he exalted himself in Israel: but when he offended (“to trespass, to be guilty; to offend greatly” – Wilson’s) in Baal, he died.”

The choice is so clear for us all, even today. In Jesus Christ we have the way up in life. In Baal (the world, the flesh and the devil) we have the way down into eternal death. The tragedy is that when we decide to go Baal’s way – after having known God’s way – the path for us goes from bad to worse:-

“. . . but when he offended in Baal, he died.

Let’s see how another translation puts it:

“It used to be when Israel spoke, the nations shook with fear, for he was a mighty prince; but he worshipped Baal and sealed his doom.

And now the people disobey more and more. They melt their silver to mould into idols, formed with skill by the hands of men. “Sacrifice to these!” they say - men kissing calves! They shall disappear like morning mist, like dew that quickly dries away, like chaff blown by the wind, like a cloud of smoke. I alone am God, your Lord, and have been ever since I brought you out from Egypt. You have no God but Me, for there is no other Saviour.

I took care of you in the wilderness, in that dry and thirsty land.

But when you had eaten and were satisfied, then you became proud and forgot Me.

So I will come upon you like a lion, or a leopard lurking along the road. I will rip you to pieces like a bear whose cubs have been taken away, and like a lion I will devour you, O Israel, if I destroy you, who can save you?

Where is your king? Why don't you call on him for help? Where are all the leaders of the land? You asked for them, now let them save you!

I gave you kings in My anger, and I took them away in My wrath.

Ephraim's sins are harvested and stored away for punishment.

New birth is offered him, but he is like a child resisting in the womb – how stubborn! How foolish!

Shall I ransom him from hell? Shall I redeem him from Death? O Death, bring forth your terrors for his tasting! O Grave, demonstrate your plagues! For I will not relent!

He was called the most fruitful of all his brothers, but the east wind – a wind of the Lord from the desert – will blow hard upon him and dry up his land. All his flowing springs and green oases will dry away, and he will die of thirst.

Samaria must bear her guilt, for she rebelled against her God. Her people will be killed by the invading army, her babies dashed to death against the ground, her pregnant women ripped open with a sword”(Hosea 13, TLB).

The Bible clearly spells out the downward path that accompanies those who yield themselves Baal and his rebellious worship.

BAAL WORSHIP

CHAPTER FOUR

BAAL WORSHIP CAN BE CONQUERED

WE HAVE SEEN throughout this study the effects of Baal worship upon God's people, from kings to commoners alike. Not all the kings and leaders of Scripture yielded to Baal; some stood up very bravely against the forces of evil and delivered Israel. In this next section we shall look at those brave people and what they did to overthrow Baal.

GIDEON ("great warrior" or "the cutter down"):

Gideon had a visit from an angel of God at the time when Israel was being intimidated by the Midianites, who continually raided their crops. Gideon had been questioning the power of God to deliver when the challenge and call of God came to him to rise up against the Midianites. Israel had obviously once again fallen into disobedience and disgrace, and turned to Baal worship. God wanted to deliver them and Gideon was the chosen vessel.

"And it came to pass the same night, that the Lord said unto him, Take your father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the grove that is by it:

And build an altar unto the Lord your God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which you

shall cut down.

Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night.

And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built.

And they said one to another, Who has done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing.

Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out your son, that he may die: because he has cast down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the grove that was by it. And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will you plead for Baal? Will you save him? He that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one has cast down his altar.

Therefore on that day he called him (Gideon) Jerubbaal ("contender with Baal" or "Baal will be contended with: Baal will be taught") saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he has thrown down his altar" (Judges 6:25-32).

How did Gideon turn the tide?

- 1) He heard from God.
- 2) He obeyed God (he even got help to overcome his fear).
- 3) He threw down the altar of Baal.
- 4) He cut down the grove of Baal.
- 5) He built an altar to God in the ordered place.
- 6) Baal's wooden grove was sacrificed on God's altar – the remains were destroyed by fire at the command of God.
- 7) Gideon was persecuted for his obedience – the men of the city wanted him to die but Gideon's father Joash stood with him at the crucial moment; yet it was his altar that Gideon had

destroyed.

- 8) Joash rightly challenged Baal to plead for himself – but he couldn't. He was just a dumb idol.

Gideon proved to be a great warrior who contended against Baal worship. No wonder they called him Jerubbaal.

Sadly, as soon as Gideon's time was up on earth the people turned away from God and back to Baal:

"And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring ("to commit fornication to play the whore or harlot; . . . The relation existing between God and the Israelitish people being everywhere shadowed forth by the prophets under the emblem of the conjugal union, so that the people in worshipping other gods are compared to a harlot and adulteress . . ." – Wilson's) ***after Baalim, and made Baal-berith*** ("lord of the covenant") ***their god.***

And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side:

Neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel" (Judges 8:33-35).

SAMUEL ("heard of God" or "his name (is) of God"):

Approximately 100 years on from Gideon, the prophet Samuel confronts the people over their worship of Baalim and Ashtoreth:–

". . . If you do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtoreth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only: and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtoreth, and served the Lord only" (1 Samuel 7:3-4).

What happened here was:

- 1) There had to be a returning to God with all their hearts.
- 2) They had to put away their false gods of Baalim and Ashtoreth – renounce and be finished with them.
- 3) They had to prepare ("establish; make ready or suitable") their

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hearts to serve God.

- 4) There was to be only one God – THE LORD – in their lives. All other gods had to go.
- 5) They did it! Praise the Lord! So it can be done. There is deliverance to the truly repentant.

JEHORAM (“Jah is high; Jehovah is exalted”):

Although a wicked king who “wrought evil in the sight of the Lord,” Jehoram did put away the image of Baal that his father had made (2 Kings 3:1-3).

JEHU (“Jah is he” or “he shall be (subsist)”):

Jehu devised a cunning plot to get rid of the Baal worshippers (he was also used of God to destroy Jezebel – 2 Kings 9:30-37). He made out that he was going to worship Baal at a special solemn assembly. All the Baal worshippers were to be there, and no one else was allowed in. The place was packed full of people. Jehu had prior to this organised 80 men – at the given word – to go in and slay all those wicked worshippers. This they did. Also they burned the images and broke down the image of Baal.

“Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel” (see 2 Kings 10: 18-28).

JEHOIADA (“Jehovah knows” or “Jehovah is knower”):

“And Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord’s people...”

And all the people of the land went into the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars . . .” (2 Kings 11:17-18 and 2 Chronicles 23:16-17).

JOSIAH (“Jah supports; he will be sustained of Jehovah”):

King Josiah was a good king who ***“did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of David his father . . .”*** (2 Kings 22:2). He tackled the task of delivering the people from the curse of Baalim:

“And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to

bring forth out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel. And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets (remember Ashtoreth is connected with the planet Venus), ***and to all the host of heaven.***

And he brought out the grove from the house of the Lord, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people.

And he brake down the house so the sodomites, ("sacred, consecrated; male prostitute, so called as consecrated to the service of Astarte or Venus" – Wilson's), ***that were by the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the grove . . .***

And he defiled Topheth ("a spitting; altar") . . . ***that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire of Molech.***

And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun . . . And burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, did the king beat down, and brake them down from there, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.

And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, ("to destroy, to ruin; to destroy one's way, i.e. to corrupt or pervert it, and hence to act wickedly . . . Moral corruption implies the loss of integrity and of virtue" – Wilson's), ***which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination*** ("destestable thing" – Young's) ***of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile.*** ("to render unclean" – Young's).

And he brake in pieces the images and cut down the groves,

and filled their places with the bones of men.

Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove

And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the Lord to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel.

And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned the men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem . . .

Moreover the workers with familiar spirits ("supernatural spirits often assuming animal forms, supposed to attend and aid witches, wizards, etc." – Collins'), ***and the wizards*** ("male witches or men who practice, or profess to practice magic or sorcery" – Collins'), ***and the images*** (Teraphim: "family gods, domestic idols; the Penates of the Hebrews: they seem to have had the human form and stature, and to have been consulted as oracles: from the Syriac, to enquire: Ezekiel 21:21; Zechariah 10:2. Jurieu suggests that it may come from "to heal or cure," and that they were gods worshipped or consulted with a view to health. Probably they may be regarded as divining images, and used for some purpose similar to that of the ephod" – Wilson's), ***and the idols*** ("what are rolled about, large idols; material objects, especially a carved image, that is worshipped as a god"), ***and all the abominations*** ("detestable things; persons or things that are disgusting and loathsome") ***that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book . . . Found in the house of the Lord"*** (2 Kings 23:4-24 and 2 Chronicles 34:1-8).

How did Josiah clean-up God's house?

- He commanded all of Baal's regalia to be taken out of the temple of the Lord (verse 4).
- He burned all of Baal's idolatrous vessels outside of Jerusalem (signifying a public reproach to Baal) (verse 4).
- He carried the ashes to Bethel ("house of God"). This was most likely an offering to God to show that Baal had been literally destroyed (verse 4).

- He put down the idolatrous priests, even though they had been ordained by former kings to serve Baal (verse 5). Then he slew them (verse 20).
- He brake down the grove and burned it (verse 6).
- He stamped the ashes of the grove to powder and threw the powdered ashes on the graves of the children of Israel. Baal worship had sent them to their graves in rebellion against God (verse 6,14).
- He destroyed the houses of prostitution and immorality which were right next to the house of the Lord. Those houses were part of Baal worship (verse 7).
- He brake down the high places (these were features of Canaanite religion. Being defiled by Canaanite fertility cults and other paganistic pollutions, the high places were often connected with licentiousness – Hosea 4:11-14 – and immorality – Jeremiah 3:2. Also sometimes first – born babies were slain and their bodies placed in jars near the high place) – (Unger’s Bible Dictionary). (verse 8).
- He put a stop to the sacrificing of children in the fire to Molech (verse 10).
- He took away the horses that had been given to the sun (god). (verse 11).
- He brake down the altars (“slaughter places” – Young’s; “raised places . . .; or structures where sacrifices are offered and religious rites are performed” – Collins’) (verse 12).
- He brake down the high places which King Solomon had built for Ashtoreth, Chemosh and Milcom. The Bible called that place where Solomon did these terrible deeds “the mount of corruption” (verse 13).
- He brake in pieces the images (verse 14).
- He cleaned out all evil workers – stopped them from carrying on their wicked deeds (verse 24).

It was clear to Josiah that Baal worship had to be literally stamped out of the lives of the people. It was an abhorrence to the ways of God: the blessing of God cannot flow wherever Baal worship is adhered to.

A good example of this is Jehoshaphat ("Jehovah is judge"):-

"And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim; But sought to the Lord God of his father, and walked in His commandments, and not after the doings of Israel.

Therefore the Lord established the kingdom (of Judah) in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honour in abundance.

And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah" (2 Chronicles 17:3-6).

ZEPHANIAH ("treasured of Jehovah" or "Jah is darkness"):

The prophet Zephaniah prophesied in the days of King Josiah and he had the following to say concerning Baal worship:

"I will utterly consume all things from off the land, says the Lord. I will consume man and beast, I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, says the Lord.

I will also stretch out My hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarims (servants, priests or "as changed ones") with the priests;

And them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship and that swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham (an idol of the Ammonites)"(Zephaniah 1:1-5).

As we have already seen in many preceding Scriptures, God promises to cut off Baal worshippers. In this portion of Zephaniah we are given some more information on understanding Baal worship.

They are:

- 1) **"The Chemarims":** They are idolatrous priests; the priests appointed by the kings of Judah for the worship of the high places and the idolatrous worship of Jehovah (Unger's). What an insult to God!

- 2) **"The host of heaven"**: This is the army of the skies (Genesis 2:1). The sun, moon, and stars, under the symbol of an army; in which the sun is considered as king, the moon as his vice-regent, the stars and planets as their attendants (compare Judges 5:20). The worship of the host of heaven was one of the earliest forms of idolatry, and was common among the Israelites in the times of their declension from the pure service of God (see Deuteronomy 4:14-19; 2 Kings 17:16; 2 Kings 21:3-5; Jeremiah 19:13 & Acts 7:42,43) (Unger's).

- 3) **"Malcham"**: This was the national god of the Ammonites equated sometimes with Molech or Moloch. Malcham (Revised Standard Version says "Milcom" was an "abomination" worshipped by Solomon (1 Kings 11:5,33) and extirpated ("removed or destroyed completely") by Josiah (2 Kings 23:13) (Unger's).

The Ammonites were the result of incest between Lot and his younger daughter, just as the Moabites were the result of an incestual relationship between Lot and his older daughter (Genesis 19:30-38).

SUMMING UP:

We have seen from this study that the Bible (especially the Old Testament) has a lot to say about Baal worship and its destructive ways. Because it is mainly Old Testament Scriptures, does that mean that Baal worship no longer exists today? **NO**. The kingdom of evil is essentially spiritual and the spirit of Baal continues on today under new names. Some of these names are: the world, the flesh and the devil, disobedience, rebellion, lawlessness, immorality (religious and sexual), idolatry, the occult, witchcraft, humanism, Satanism, new age . . . in fact any thing or any body that stands between us and the Living Saviour, Jesus Christ, who is God's Son. If Jesus Christ is not Lord of all of us personally, then He is not Lord at all. If Jesus Christ is not Lord of us, then it means that some one or some thing else holds more importance to us than God's plan of Salvation. Without the grace and power of God to protect us in a very positive way today, then our life will be drawn into the subtle ways of Baal worship – serving something other than God Himself.

Jesus acknowledged the reality of Baal worship in His day. He spoke of Satan and Beelzebub as being real, evil personalities. Something else to think on is this. It is interesting that the same sins the Book of Revelation mentions for Babylon are all found in Baal worship (see Revelation 17 & 18). The "spirit of Jezebel" which we hear such a lot about is the spirit of Baal and Ashtoreth – manipulation and domination. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). But those

BAAL WORSHIP

works of the devil are only destroyed in us after we, of our own free will, decide to place our life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We then enter into a covenant relationship with Jesus through His shed blood on Calvary. And as long as we walk in obedience to the covenant, we have power over Satan and his wicked ways through the mighty name of Jesus Christ.

Have you ever wondered why the kingdom of darkness has so much blood sacrificing involved in its deeper arts? It is Satan's way of mocking God and His perfect plan of Salvation.

Satan has deceived the world into believing that by self sacrifice of blood, animal and human, that man can find favour with the god he serves. It is an abomination in the sight of God! It takes the unrepentant to hell!

THE END-TIME CHURCH

It is my personal belief that the Church of Jesus Christ will be used of God in a glorious way to expose and put down the powers of darkness. Just as Moses challenged the magicians of Egypt and Elijah the false prophets of Baal in their day, so today the powers of darkness must be challenged to know that **JESUS CHRIST IS LORD!** Until the Church arises in resurrection power to defeat the enemy, then we will have an anaemic Christianity that is looked upon as being "a hang over" from the dark ages.

One of the ways of winning the victory over the enemy is to know his strategies, then to use the weapons of our warfare to conquer him. If there is one thing he hates, it is our discovering his tactics against the human race – he wants to take us all to hell with him. And one of his tactics is to keep us Christians **IGNORANT** of his ways; for as long as we are ignorant then he can keep us afraid of his devices. Ignorance and fear are two of his chief weapons against us – still today.

Let us realise that in the Bible there were some great men and women of God who fell prey to Baal worship. Don't let it happen to **you!** It is only as we live and walk close to our covenant-keeping God that we are guaranteed complete freedom against the enemy of our souls. Let us do that always.

I trust this study has helped to inform you of some of the Satanic struggles that are revealed in the Bible.

God bless you.

PRAYER:

"Dear Father, I come to You in the All-Powerful Name of Jesus Christ Your Son. I ask You to give me wisdom in my interpreting of Your Word. Help me to see the subtleties of Satan - not only as revealed in Your Word, but also in society today - that I will be correctly

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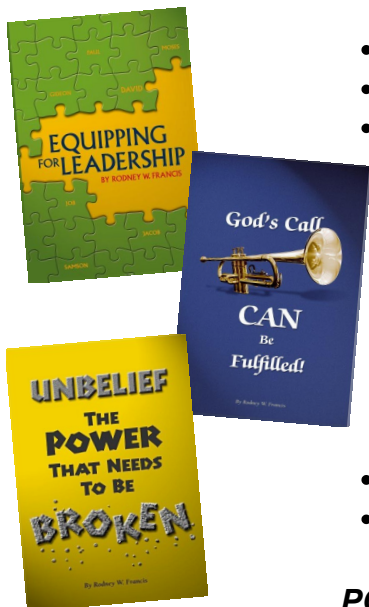
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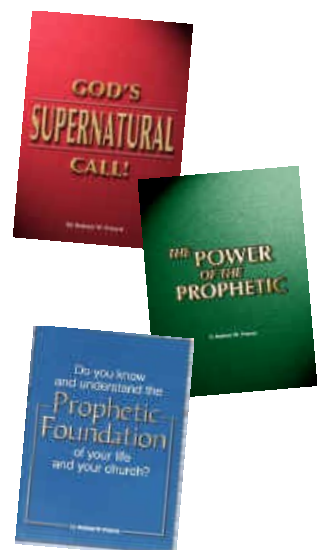
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Rodney W. Francis is the Founder/Director of "The Gospel Faith Messenger", a Ministry involved in proclaiming the Gospel through Gospel literature, books, booklets, manuals, Gospel Tracts, E-Mail ministries, the World Wide Web, a monthly Prayer Support Letter and Barnabas Bulletin, 3 Bible Correspondence Courses (free), Equipping Stations (Training of Prophetic Teams), Prophetic Equipping Schools, Prophetic Conferences, Personal Prophetic Ministry, Schools Of The Holy Spirit, Church Meetings, Counseling, CD's, GFM International Prayer Team, etc.

It commenced in 1964 and has been instrumental in touching multiplied thousands of people in currently 108 nations. Rodney's ministry takes him to the wider Body of Christ internationally, where he is able to impart a unique combination of the love of God and Holy Spirit giftings. He has had many years of church involvement, Pastoring, Leadership positions, Church Planting, Training Timothy's and Equipping for Leadership. More than 34 books (including Teaching Manuals) have been written which are read in numbers of countries.

Since the commencement of the year 2000, Rodney and Jean have been full-time in "The GFM", trusting the Lord for their provision. Rodney is credentialed with "The GFM" Ministry and the U.K. Elim Churches Incorporated (ECI).