

THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

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Worship to Baal

Baal, or Ba'al was the principal male god of the Canaanites. Actually, the term Baal means "Lord" in the Hebrew language, and was used in the Old Testament in reference to many different gods, including Jehovah.

In fact, in the days of Hosea the worship of idols had become so prolific that God equated the unfaithfulness of Israel with whoredom.

They had taken to calling Jehovah "Baali" literally "My Baal" or "My Lord." God condemned the practice, saying:

"And it shall be, in that day," Says the LORD, "That you will call Me 'My Husband,' And no longer call Me 'My Master,' For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, And they shall be remembered by their name no more" (Hosea 2:16-17).

We can certainly see why God would not want to be affiliated with the false gods the Israelites were worshipping. They would be abolished in judgment, and Jehovah would be acknowledged as the one true God.

Baal worship began early in Jewish history. Before the even gained their inheritance in the land of promise the practice was seen. While in Moab, (Numbers 25), the men of Israel took harlots from the women of Moab, and were influenced to worship their gods. Notice the following:

"They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel" (Numbers 25:2-3).

The text seems to indicate that worship of the baalim had a licentious quality. For whatever reason, the Jews never completely expunged the practice of Baal worship from their midst.

In the time of Ahab, the practice reached its zenith. Ahab had married Jezebel, a Phoenician princess. *"He took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. The he set up an altar*

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors:

We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please do come back at your every opportunity!

Deirdre Wilson is in Abilene with her ailing mother. It was announced Wednesday that there was little hope for her recovery. We have now received word that a doctor in Abilene is suggesting angioplasty (a stint in the aorta artery). Deirdre believes that there may be some hope and asks for our prayers.

Mac McBroom has returned home safely and is slowly getting his back better.

Manuel Ruiz (the prisoner I have been studying with) will be up for parole in a couple of months. He asks for our prayers on his behalf. We just completed a study of the book of Titus and will be moving on to Philemon.

Adult Bible Studies:

Sunday mornings we are studying the book of James and Wednesday we are studying Ecclesiastes.

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York
692-0489 (Home).

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for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.” (1 Kings 16:31-33).

At that time there were 450 prophets serving Baal (cf. 1 Kings 18:22), and the text reveals at least one aspect of their worship to Baal. *“They leaped about the altar which they had made...” (vs. 26), “So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them” (vs. 28).*

Perhaps the most appalling aspect of Baal worship, practiced on numerous occasions by the Jews themselves, was the use of human sacrifices to appease the god. Jeremiah, in his description of the Valley of the son of Hinnom, called it an *“alien place,”* because the people had *“burned incense in it to other gods”*, and had *“filled this place with the blood of the innocents.”* (Jeremiah 19:4). In verses 5-6, he wrote, *“(They have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind), “therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “that this place shall no more be called Tophet or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter.”*

The worship of Baal was the primary reason for the eventual destruction of Jerusalem, and the judgment of Judah. God told Jeremiah, *“Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it. And the Chaldeans who fight against this city shall come and set fire to this city and burn it, with the houses on whose roofs they have offered incense to Baal and poured out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke Me to anger; because the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done only evil before Me from their youth. For the children of Israel have provoked Me only to anger with the work of their hands,’ says the LORD”* (Jeremiah 32:28-30).

Idolatry in any age is unacceptable to God. Though the Jews at one time enjoyed the favor of the Almighty, they squandered their position through the vain pursuit of impotent idols. We should learn from their unfortunate mistakes, and give God the place of preeminence in our own lives!

By
Stan Cox
2006

The Christian

Introduction:

Luke records, “*The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch*” (Acts 11:26). The Christian is one who “professes belief in Jesus as Christ or following the religion based on his teachings” (AHD 271)... “a follower of Christ” (Moulton 439). John identifies the Christian as a child of God at John 1:1-14. Let us examine these verses to understand better what being a Christian is all about.

I. Those who “receive Jesus become the children of God” (Jn. 1:12):

- A. God “*bestowed*” His love on us in that “*we should be called children of God*” (I Jn. 3:1-2). The idea of bestowing (Greek *didomi*) something is “to give, to tender an oath... to give over, deliver” (LS 199). The word “tender” means “a formal offer, as: a. Law. An offer of money or service in payment of an obligation” (AHD 1252). That which is tendered is the Father’s love. God had promised this love (the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ) from the days of the fall of man (Gen. 3:15; cf. Acts 2:38; 13:23-39; Eph. 1:13). All are offered this relationship to God through faith (Gal. 3:26).
- B. Those who “*believe on his name*” (i.e., Jesus) have the right to be called the children of God (Jn. 1:12b). Faith is equated to obedience in the scriptures (Jn. 3:36; Heb. 11:1ff).

II. Christians are “born of God” (Jn. 1:13a):

- A. The “new birth” is explained by Jesus at John 3:1ff.
- B. The apostle Peter refers to this “new birth” as being “begotten again” (I Pet. 1:3, 23).
- C. Paul said that the disciples of Christ were “new creatures” (II Cor. 5:14-19).
- D. Here are individuals who have left a life of darkness and entered into the light of truth (Eph. 2:1ff).

III. The role of the gospel in man’s new birth:

- A. The apostle Paul said, “for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel” (I Cor. 4:15). To beget one is to literally procreate. The term is used figuratively here to illustrate what comes about through the **preaching of the gospel**.
- B. God “*calls man through the gospel*” (II Thess. 2:14) to become a new creature in Christ Jesus
- C. Note that John clearly states that being a child of God does not occur through blood (i.e., a physical birth), will of the flesh (my religious opinions), nor the will of man (man’s religious opinions).

Conclusion:

The Christian is more than a mere believer in Jesus he or she is a follower of the teachings of Christ. The **words** of the gospel instruct man unto salvation (Acts 1:14). Those who receive the gospel message, believe it (i.e. obey its instructions) and live a faithful life can expect to be in heaven.

