

Our gospel meeting dates are May 22-25 with Russ Bowman (see his article on front page) of Beaumont, Texas.

Some quotes appropriate for our meeting effort:

"The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing."

"Perseverance is the hard work you do after you get tired of doing the hard work you already did."

Let's make the effort and then pray for God to bless it.



May 15, 2011

Child Sacrifice

Russ Bowman

And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. (Leviticus 18:21).

As Israel began their trek toward the Promised Land, God prepared them for the godless influences of the Canaanites whom they were to displace. In the above chapter, He informs Israel that part of the reason they were to inherit the land is due to the wickedness of the people of Canaan—

"For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants" (Leviticus 18:25).

Thus, He warns His people about the immorality, sexual perversion, and disregard for life that had become so profound among the peoples who populated Canaan.

While many of these perversions are distasteful to the point of repulsion, the peculiar activity of child sacrifice is absolutely unimaginable. And yet the warning against "passing your children through the fire to Molech" is repeated again and again (Leviticus 18:21; 20:1f; Deuteronomy 12:29f; 18:10). God's passion for life had already been vividly illustrated to the descendants of Israel when He commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering and then refused to allow him to kill his son (Genesis 22). We should probably note that this event took place as Abraham was living in the midst of those who burned their children in the worship of Molech.

Child Sacrifice

Molech was likely a god of Semitic origin, adopted as the national god of the

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MEETING TIMES
 Sunday - Bible Classes: 9:30AM
 Worship Services 10:20AM & 6:00PM
 Wednesday - Bible Classes 7:00PM

Ammonites. It appears probable that there was a close connection between Baal worship and that directed toward Molech, as both were associated with the common religious rites of the peoples living in Canaan during the Old Testament period. And the immorality and cruelty of such rituals did impact the nation of Israel for years.

Solomon built a place of worship for Molech (1 Kings 11:5–7) and kings from both the northern and southern kingdoms sacrificed some of their children to Molech (2 Kings 16:3; 17:17; 21:6). Prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel denounced such practices and attributed the punishment and captivity of God's people, in part, to their affinity for such abominations. Apparently Israel focused her Molech worship at a place called Topheth in the Hinnom valley, southwest of Jerusalem. Here the people would kill their children as sacrifices and then offer their bodies as burnt offerings. The image of Molech was a human figure with a bull's head and outstretched arms, ready to receive the children destined for sacrifice. This practice persisted among the people of God, in spite of reforms such as that of Josiah (2 Kings 23:10), until they were carried away into Babylonian captivity.

It's difficult to envision such. The thought of taking my child and cutting her throat so that I could burn her body in reverence for some lifeless image is utterly repugnant. And more so, the thought that someone could take an infant and place it upon red hot metal so that it convulses only to roll off into a pit of fire is sickening to contemplate. And yet such were the demands of idolatry. Can you imagine the outcry were someone in our day to suggest such a religious activity?

No one will replace "Bring Your Kids to Church Day" with "Burn Your Kids for God Day."

We're too advanced for that. There's no way we would engage in such superstitious and reprehensible nonsense. Of course, we'll abort untold millions of babies, but we won't burn them.

Even More Troubling ...

All those children, slaughtered in the worship of Molech, were at least innocent victims whose unstained souls were destined for eternal reward. But what about the souls of the children in our day who are being sacrificed upon the altars of education, entertainment, athletics, or wealth? We wouldn't kill our children for a god of stone, but we will usher them into the temple of academic pursuit or musical accomplishment or gymnastics or soccer or baseball. We'll make sure they get their homework but won't emphasize or encourage Bible study. They don't miss school or practice or ball games, but they miss worship services and Bible classes. We make sure that they know the right people to secure their educational or occupational future, but we make knowing God's family unimportant.

We set their priorities for them so that they learn that gods are more important than the true God. We groom and direct them in the pursuit of lifeless, vain, and empty idols. And after years of sacrificing our children, we wonder why they don't grow up to respect the Lord and worship Him. At least the victims of Molech worship died before they became habitual idolaters of their own accord. We, on the other hand, are destining our children to their own demise as accountable, and thus doomed, individuals. I wonder, in the eyes of God, which is more abominable?

David and The Showbread

There are often questions raised about the incident where Jesus' disciples were chastised by the Pharisees for gathering corn on the Sabbath. The account goes like this:

"At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pick the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? ... if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."(Matthew 12: 1-7)

There are many, including some well known Bible commentators, who attempt to use this passage to teach "situation ethics." It is their view that under extreme circumstances it is allowable to set aside the specific commands of God. However, it is a misapplication to use this text in such a way. Note:

1) The action of the disciples was lawful. It was not stealing (Deut. 23:25) and it was not a type of work that was forbidden on the Sabbath day (Ex. 20:8-11). In fact, it should be observed that Jesus specifically said they were "*guiltless*" (vs. 7).

2) David's actions in the matter of the showbread were sinful. Jesus said that he did that which was "*not lawful*" (vs. 4). A careful reading of 1 Samuel 21 & 22 shows that David also lied in that episode and later repented of his sinful conduct.

With these truths clearly understood, then the question remains: Why did Jesus even mention David and the showbread? The reason is this: The Jews loved and honored the memory of David. They would never criticize his actions. Jesus was pointing out their inconsistency. They justified David in an obvious and blatant sin, and they condemned His disciples for doing something that was not a sin at all.

Clearly, this text cannot be used to defend "situation ethics."

(author unknown)