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# Human Sacrifice in Scripture

by David Sielaff, September 2020

Read first the September 1, 2020 Commentary "[Suffer the Little Children](#)"

Then read the "[September 2020 Newsletter](#)"



**Human sacrifice is a theme in Scripture beginning in Genesis through to the Book of Revelation. Human sacrifice is mentioned often in the Old Testament as a tremendous evil. The birth, ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ changed the symbolism of human sacrifice in a way that only God can accomplish. Working through God's grace, good suddenly came from the worst evil, and righteousness resulted from sinful acts against God Himself. This was done by Christ, the Messiah, who was Himself a human sacrifice, to the glory of God and for the salvation of the world.**

Christ's human sacrifice was planned before the foundation of the world, and it will be discussed at the end of this article. The Wikipedia definition is standard:

**"[Human sacrifice](#) is the act of killing one or more human beings as part of a religious ritual (ritual killing). Its typology closely parallels the various practices of ritual slaughter of animals (animal sacrifice) and of religious sacrifice in general."**

The article, "[Sacrifice, Human](#)" from the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1914 is useful:

**"It is clear from many general statements that the custom [of human sacrifice] was widespread among the masses of the people as well. It is forbidden in the Mosaic legislation (Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-5; Deuteronomy 18:10); it is said in 2 Kings 17:17 that the sacrifice of sons and daughters was one of the causes of the captivity of the ten tribes. Jeremiah charges the people of the Southern Kingdom with doing the same thing (Jeremiah 7:31; 19:5; 32:35); with these general statements agree Isaiah 57:5; Ezekiel 16:2 f; 20:31; 23:37; Psalm 106:37 f.**

**A study of these passages makes it certain that in the period immediately before the captivity of Judah, human sacrifice was by no means confined to the royal family, but was rather common among the people. Daughters as well as sons were sacrificed. It is mentioned only once in connection with the Northern Kingdom, and then only in the summary of the causes of their captivity (2 Kings 17:17), the Southern Kingdom [of Judah] in its later years was evidently deeply affected. ...**

**The Biblical writers without exception look upon the practice with horror as the supreme point of national and religious apostasy, and a chief cause of national disaster. They usually term the rite '[passing through fire](#),' probably being unwilling to use the sacred term '[sacrifice](#)' in**

reference to such a revolting custom. There is no evidence of a continuance of the practice in captivity nor after the return.”

### *Cain Sacrificed Abel at the Altar of YHWH in Eden — The First Human Sacrifice*

Cain’s murder of Abel was a human sacrifice. When He rebuked the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:29; Luke 11:46 adds lawyers) Jesus spoke about Abel’s murder and where it was done:

“**That upon you** [the generation Jesus was speaking to, see Luke below] **may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar.**”

• *Matthew 23:35*

“**From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.**”

• *Luke 11:51*

By pointing out the first and the latest religious murders, Jesus condemns all the murders that religious officials have committed, sponsored, aided, abetted, or encouraged. Those who committed the crimes were just like Cain, even to the latest murder of Zecharias who was slain by the altar in the Temple, near God’s presence.

You may ask, was Abel slain near an altar? Yes. Abel was a herdsman, a keeper of flocks of sheep, goats, and perhaps cattle. Like Adam, Cain was a farmer (Genesis 3:22–4:2). Both brought offerings. Cain’s was not accepted. Abel’s offering was accepted (Genesis 4:3–5).

“**Outside the Holy of Holies and just to the East of it was the general Holy Place. In it John saw a golden altar with incense and a censor associated with it (Revelation 8:3). Located in front of this incense altar, outside the Holy Place [to the east], was another altar under which were the ‘souls of them that were slain for the word of God’ (Revelation 6:9).**”

• *Dr. Ernest Martin, “[The Temple Symbolism in Genesis](#)”*

John knew the Temple layout; he was present when Jesus spoke about Cain and Abel. John’s vision confirmed that the murder of Abel by Cain occurred by the altar where sacrificial offerings were presented to YHWH.

“**Therefore YHWH God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.**”

• *Genesis 3:23–24*

Adam and Eve were cast out through a gate or entrance to the east of the Garden. The Tabernacle and all Israelite Temples had a similar arrangement from the Holy Place east through an entrance. An altar was east of the entrance. Offerings or sacrifices were presented there, as Cain and Abel presented their offerings.

Abel was murdered near or at the altar, as were many other saints through the centuries as Christ said. They were symbolically and ritually murdered by men of the same mindset as Cain: the scribes, Pharisees, and lawyers who wanted Jesus dead and plotted to kill Him (Matthew 21:38, 45–46, 26:1–5; Mark 14:1–2; Luke 19:47–48, 20:19; and John 11:45–57).

Cain murdered Abel in anger knowing that YHWH and the Cherubim were watching the human sacrifice near the altar of God’s presence. It was done not as an offering to YHWH. It was an act of jealousy toward Abel and an act of rebellion and hatred toward God. It was a human sacrifice. God knew Cain’s anger and gave him a solution (Genesis 4:6–7), an acceptable sacrifice for him to present to God. (Read “[The Temple Symbolism in Genesis](#).”) Cain rejected it. Neither God nor the cherubim stopped Cain from murdering Abel.

### *YHWH Commanded Abraham to Sacrifice His Son Isaac*

When he was 99 years old, YHWH made a covenant with Abram, changed his name to Abraham, and told

him nations and kings would come forth out from him. Abraham was still 99 years old when YHWH later told him his wife Sarah would bear him a child. Abraham laughed at the statement. God told him to name his son “Isaac” which means “laughter.” Isaac was born when Abraham was 100, and Sarah was 90 years old.

**“And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, ‘Behold, here I am.’ And he said, ‘Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and get you into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you of.”**

• **Genesis 22:1–2**

God commanded Abraham to take Isaac to the land of Moriah, kill him, and give him as a burnt offering. There was nothing joyful in what Abraham was asked to do. Abraham was not laughing.

**“Child sacrifice is the ritualistic killing of children in order to please, propitiate, or force a god or supernatural beings in order to achieve a desired result. As such, it is a form of human sacrifice.”**

• **“Child Sacrifice” in World Heritage Encyclopedia**

It is likely that Isaac was a vigorous young man in his twenties or older. It would have been easy for him to outrun his 100+ year old father. Isaac submitted himself to his fate. Isaac (who has not one negative thing said about him in Scripture) is portrayed as being Christ-like.

James, the half-brother of Jesus, wrote about Abraham’s near-sacrifice of Isaac:

**“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? [The answer to this rhetorical question is yes.]**

**See you how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? [Yes again.] And the scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness:’ and he was called the Friend of God.”**

• **James 2:21–23**

Abraham said to Isaac, **“My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering”** (Genesis 22:8). Abraham believed that somehow Isaac would live, whatever happened.

Imagine how Abraham hugged his son after God provided the substitute sacrifice of the ram. Imagine how Abraham laughed after God stopped Isaac’s death. Did Isaac admire his father for trusting YHWH? The story of Isaac’s birth to an elderly couple gives background to Abraham’s near sacrifice of Isaac, and Abraham’s act of faith (and Isaac’s trust in his father). It foreshadowed God and Christ’s relationship and sacrifice.

### ***Human Sacrifice by the Nations***

The extent of human sacrifice was worldwide in all periods of time since Cain killed Abel. As religious historian John M. Robertson wrote: **“[A]ncient testimonies show the practice at no distant time to have subsisted among nearly all the races then known, especially among the Semites and the ‘barbarians.’”**<sup>1</sup> See Robertson’s index lists at the end of this article telling of the many peoples who practiced human sacrifice in history:

**“The sacrificing of children in particular may or may not have spread from the Semites, among whom it was at one time normal, as it was among the pre-Christian Mexicans and Peruvians, and seems to have been till quite recently among the northern Zulus. Female infants were frequently put to death among the Arabs before Mohammed, whether or not by way of sacrifice; as they have been in China and elsewhere in Asia in recent times; and they were sacrificed on special grounds in the South Sea Islands before the arrival of the missionaries. Among the North American Indians propitiatory sacrifices of children are known to have occurred in the nineteenth century. It was among the Semites, in any case, that they were most common in the**

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<sup>1</sup> John M. Robertson, *Pagan Christs: Studies in Comparative Hierology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Watts & Co., 1911). 122. “Hierology” is the study of sacred things. Human life is sacred, but often is not held in high esteem.

Mediterranean world. The standing provision in the Hebrew code, and the stories of Abraham and Isaac and Jephthah's daughter tell of a once regular practice; and the Greek and Latin testimonies as to Carthaginian usage are overwhelming. The association of Carians with Greeks in the sacrifice of the sons of Phanes in the Perso-Egyptian war — a rite consummated by the drinking of their blood, mixed with wine and water — suggests the preponderance of eastern influence, especially as regards the sacramental conception.

• *John M. Robertson, Pagan Christs, 123–124*

Another source about people around the world who practiced human sacrifice is in the article "[Human Sacrifice](#)" in the *World Heritage Encyclopedia* (n.d., accessed August 8, 2020). Author Nigel Davies says:

**“Just as the children of Israel copied the bloody rites of the Canaanites, so the Romans at times adopted those of their Carthaginian enemies, to the extent that the Carthaginian Baal, or Moloch, came to be identified with the Roman Saturn. Child sacrifice was a speciality of the Carthaginians, inherited from their Phoenician and Canaanite ancestors. In honor of Baal, who was both Sun God and God of Fire, the children were rolled down into a fiery pit in the shape of the image of the god; the image was itself known as Moloch.”**

• *Nigel Davies, Human Sacrifice, 50–51*<sup>2</sup>

Here is an example of human sacrifice by the pagan King of Moab witnessed by the army of the northern Israel in 2 Kings 3:1–25. The fighting went against Moab.

**“And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom [allied with Moab]: but they could not. Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall [they burned him alive].”**

• *2 Kings 3:26–27*

### *Human Sacrifice by Israel and Judah*

Socializing and connecting with the enemies of God by the people of Israel leads directly to idolatry. The final expression of idolatry is human sacrifice. Whether done by religious leaders (judges, prophets, Levites, and priests), secular leaders (kings and governors), tribal leaders, or the people, idolatry violated the Israel's covenant with YHWH. If they are faithful, YHWH told Israel He would drive out the nations if they obeyed:

**“Observe you that which I command you this day: behold, I DRIVE OUT BEFORE YOU the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.**

**Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither you go, lest it be for a snare in the midst of you: But [1] you shall destroy their altars, [2] break their images, and [3] cut down their groves:**

**For you shall worship no other god: for YHWH, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: Lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and [when]**

- **they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and**
- **one call you, and you eat of his sacrifice; And**
- **you take of their daughters unto your sons, and**
- **their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and**
- **make your sons go a whoring after their gods.**

**You shalt make you no molten gods.”**

• *Exodus 34:11–17*

Once the people of Israel began to do these sins, God withdrew his offer to drive out the nations from the

<sup>2</sup> Nigel Davies, *Human Sacrifice: in History and Today* (New York, Wm Morrow & Co, 1981). Davies' book updates Robertson's 1911 book. Davies was an archaeologist and historian specializing in South American tribes and ritual practices.

land. Instead they had to drive out or kill the inhabitants of the land themselves, one by one. Israel failed to do that, even with God's help. They became hardened by the work of war. It was a bloody task God required them to do. It was necessary because of their sins in violation of their Covenant with their God. YHWH's prohibitions and warnings were repeated time and again. Violations were punishable by death:

**“And you shall not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt you profane the name of your God: I am YHWH.”**

• *Leviticus 18:21*

R.A. Torrey explains the relationship of the terms “molech” and “baal” to the gods called by those terms:

**“Molech signifies a king, or governor, of similar import with Baâl, lord, or governor; and it is generally supposed that the sun was worshipped under this name; and more particularly as the fire appears to have been so much employed in his worship. It seems clear that children were not only consecrated to him by passing through the fire, which appears to be alluded to here, but that they were actually made a burnt offering to him. ... That the several abominations afterwards mentioned were actually practised by many heathen nations is abundantly attested by their own writers.”**

• *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge, note on Leviticus 18:21*

**“YHWH spoke unto Moses, saying, Again, you shall say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that gives any of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones. And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he has given of his seed unto Molech, [1] to defile my sanctuary, and [2] to profane my holy name.**

**And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he gives of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not: Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people.**

**And the soul that turns after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.”**

• *Leviticus 20:1–6*

Note the restatement of the crime, restatement of the punishment, and restatement of YHWH's actions toward the community. This is done for emphasis. Note also the clear and direct relationship different forms of idolatry have to the deadly sin and evil of human sacrifice. The situation deteriorated until God destroyed Israel, just as God said when He first separated Israel from the other nations.

At the end of 40 years in the wilderness, Moses wrote the last book of the Law — Deuteronomy. God through Moses again told Israel they must not associate with the people they are dispossessing. It will lead to worshipping other gods and doing the sinful practices of the nations:

**“When YHWH your God shall cut off the nations from before you, whither you go to possess them, and you succeed them, and dwell in their land; Take heed to yourself that you be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before you; and that you enquire not after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.’**

**You shall not do so unto YHWH your God: for every abomination to YHWH, which he hates, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.”**

• *Deuteronomy 12:29–32*

**“When you are come into the land which YHWH your God gives you, you shall not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto YHWH: and because of these**



**abominations YHWH your God does drive them out from before you.**

• **Deuteronomy 18:9–12**

The process of falling into idolatry involved progressive actions:

- [1] first they “honored” the gods (*elohim*) of other nations,<sup>3</sup>
- [2] then they gave offerings (sacrifices) to the “gods” as YHWH’s creations that were originally assigned to supervise the nations,
- [3] they worshipped and sought “gifts” from minor gods<sup>4</sup> in return for Israel’s worship and offerings (while also worshipping and giving offerings to YHWH), and
- [4] they worshipped them to exclude and replace the worship of YHWH, the creator and only true God.

Their reasoning was as follows: YHWH creates the gods (*elohim*, meaning spiritual beings) just as He created Adam and mankind. Therefore, we are honoring YHWH by worshipping His creatures that He has put over us alongside YHWH Himself. In other words, they began to worship other creatures like themselves, although they were not often physical. Such is the perverse reasoning, as the apostle Paul explains fully in the larger context Romans 1:18–32. For now, read a shorter segment of Romans chapter 1:

**“For the invisible things of him [God] from the creation of the world [Greek, *kosmos*, everything God created] are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.**

**Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image [an idol] made like to [1] corruptible man, and [2] to birds, and [3] four-footed beasts, and [4] creeping things.”**

• **Romans 1:20–23**

YHWH created the gods,<sup>5</sup> just as He created Adam, or so a pagan’s reasoning goes, why not worship them also? The idolatry by the people of Israel led to murder and human sacrifice. In Psalm 106 King David looks back from his time and lists Israel’s sins after they entered the land God promised for Israel’s twelve tribes:

- **“They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom YHWH commanded them: But**
- **[they] were mingled among the heathen [people of the nations], and learned their works. And**
- **they served their idols [the idols of the nations]: which were a snare unto them. Yea,**
- **they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils [demons], And**
- **[they] shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom**
- **they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. Thus were**
- **they defiled with their own works, and**
- **[they] went a whoring with their own inventions.**

<sup>3</sup> This began communication between the gods and Israelites. Some Israelites became priests and false prophets. Israelites organized priesthoods to serve, to honor, communicate with, and make offerings to the pagan gods. This included human sacrifice.

<sup>4</sup> The gifts these “gods” gave to Israelites were the same gifts the nations received from their gods: prophecies for the future, help and success in life’s affairs and in battle (supposedly), advice from dead ancestors (supposedly), lies about YHWH and about Israel’s true obligations toward Him. The lies of the pagan gods were the same kind of lies as the serpent gave to Adam and Eve.

<sup>5</sup> The “gods” are Sons of God, angels, seraphim, cherubim, principalities, powers, and authorities in the celestial realms. Colossians 1:15–16:

**“[Christ] Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.”**

**Therefore was the wrath of YHWH kindled against his people, insomuch that He abhorred his own inheritance.**

• *Psalm 106:34–40*

Israel was YHWH's inheritance as a unique nation among mankind. He gave the non-Israelite nations to be under the control of the Sons of God but kept Israel as His own inheritance.<sup>6</sup>

Psalm 106 was written by King David. Verses 46–47 are quoted in 1 Chronicles 16:35–36 as part of the David's song composed to celebrate his entry of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. The Ark signified God's presence. Dr. Martin understood that David wrote Psalm 106:

**“When [King] David wrote a ‘History of the World’ in a series of Psalms (Psalm 103:19 through to the end of Psalm 106) that described historical events from before the creation of the world until his own time, David stated that in Abraham’s day when Abraham was an important man in the eyes of nations and kings (and the texts show ‘nations’ and ‘kingdoms’ in existence), the populations involved are best described as being ‘few men in number; yea, very few’ (Psalm 105:12–13).”**

• *Ernest Martin, “Prophetic Geography and the Time of the End”*

King Solomon followed his father David as ruler of a united Kingdom of Israel. His reign began well, but when he became old, a disturbing tendency began with him: a long slide of Israelite kings worshipping other gods than YHWH over several centuries:

**“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 YHWH his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of YHWH, and went not fully after YHWH, as did David his father.**

**Then did Solomon build a high place [1] for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and [2] for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise [3] did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.**

**And YHWH was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from YHWH God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which YHWH commanded.”**

• *1 Kings 11:4–10 (see also 11:33)*

### ***Pagan Priests and Worshippers of Baal Became the “Offering”***

YHWH turned the tables on those who worshipped Baal in the northern Kingdom of Israel. They reveled in blood and God gave them blood. Consider these two incidents.

- (1) During the reign of Ahab, King of Israel, his lovely queen Jezebel ordered all the prophets of YHWH to be killed. She succeeded in killing every prophet except one. (Some of YHWH's prophets may have escaped south to the Kingdom of Judah.) Elijah, the remaining prophet of YHWH, challenged the prophets of Baal to a test at Mt. Carmel. Elijah faced 450 prophets of Baal who worshiped the gods of the “baalim” (plural for Baal). The test began. Ahab officiated and a large crowd observed (1 Kings 18:19).

**“I, even I only, remain a prophet of YHWH; but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men. ... And call you on the name of your gods [plural], and I will call on the name of YHWH: and the God that answers by fire, let him be God.’ And all the people answered and said, ‘It is well spoken.’”**

• *1 Kings 18:22, 24*

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<sup>6</sup> Read the other passages that tell of Israel being YHWH's inheritance: Exodus 34:9; Psalm 2:6–9; Isaiah 19:25, 47:5–6; Jeremiah 12:14, 16:18; Ezekiel 36:12. Christ has been allotted all the world, and all things (Hebrews 1:2, 8–9; 1 Corinthians 15:24–25). He will take possession when He returns to earth from heaven. Regarding the Sons of God, “God, gods, and the Sons of God.”

The priest of Baal **“called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, ‘O Baal hear us.’”** They leaped on the altar (1 Kings 18:26). Baal did not or could not respond to the priests of Baal to bring fire down from heaven to consume a sacrifice. Ancient people were not stupid. Baal’s priests had good reasons to expect a response from their god, otherwise they would have not agreed to the test. Nothing happened. Then for several more hours they continued to appeal to Baal. They cut themselves, spilling their own blood upon the animal sacrificed on the altar. None of the “baalim,” the spirit helpers of Baal, responded to the priests of Baal.

In his turn Elijah prayed for YHWH: **“Hear me, O YHWH, hear me, that this people may know that You are YHWH God, and that you have turned their heart back again”** (1 Kings 18:37). Elijah prayed God to bring fire down and consume the sacrificial animal. YHWH answered his prayer, the sacrifice was consumed with fire from heaven. Then Elijah called upon the crowd of Israelites to put the prophets of Baal to the sword. In a sense YHWH gave death to the pagan priests of Baal who intended to murder and sacrifice Elijah on that altar, and King Ahab would have allowed it. Read the whole story in 1 Kings 18:17–48. You might enjoy reading it in a modern translation.

- (2) Years later with YHWH’s help, Jehu, general of the army of Israel was anointed by Elisha the prophet (successor to Elijah). Jehu led a revolt against King Ahab and assumed the throne himself. Jehu killed Ahab, his lovely queen Jezebel, all seventy sons of Ahab’s, and all of Ahab’s supporters in the Kingdom of Israel (1 Kings 10:1–17).

**“And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, ‘Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much. Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live.’**

**But Jehu did it in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal. And Jehu said, ‘Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal.’ And they proclaimed it.”**

• 2 Kings 10:18–20

Jehu gathered all the worshippers of Baal in Israel and killed them at a place called **“the house of Baal”** indicating a temple of some kind (2 Kings 10:21–27). **“Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel”** (2 Kings 10:28). Jehu also killed Ahaziah, the evil King of Judah (who was recovering from wounds at one of Ahab’s homes), and killed all Ahaziah’s sons who met Jehu on the road when they were traveling to visit their father. In other words, Jehu gave Baal what “it” supposedly wanted — human blood. YHWH did the following:

- Elijah “gave” Baal the blood of “its” prophets.
- Jehu “gave” Baal the blood of “its” worshippers. Those who regularly committed human sacrifice as part of their worship of their god, were themselves slaughtered according to YHWH’s judgment.

Jehu was a true hero who took great risks and followed YHWH’s instructions after he was anointed (by the servant of the prophet Elisha) to rule the northern kingdom. He did little more than to benefit himself and protect his hold on the throne. There is no evidence he sought help from YHWH’s prophets. Despite Jehu’s reforms against the worship of Baal, he still followed idolatrous practices:

**“Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made [the northern kingdom of] Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from [going] after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan.”**

• 2 Kings 10:29

God gave the specific causes of why the northern Kingdom of Israel was sent into exile in 2 Kings 17:5–23. Here is a synopsis of God’s longer explanation:

**“And they [1] left all the commandments of YHWH their God, and [2] made them molten images,**



even two calves, and [3] made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and [4] served Baal. And they [5] caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and [6] used divination and enchantments, and [7] sold themselves to do evil in the sight of YHWH, to provoke Him to anger.

Therefore YHWH was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.”

• 2 Kings 17:16–18

Most rulers of the northern Kingdom of Israel committed the sin of human sacrifice. Some kings of Judah were righteous and did not commit human sacrifice, but some did, in numbers worse than the northern kings.

Later, King Ahaz of Judah also did horrific and forbidden things, acts like the Canaanites did to their children. Both Second Kings and Second Chronicles report about Ahaz:

“But he [Ahaz] walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom YHWH cast out from before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.”

• 2 Kings 16:3–4

“[Ahaz] did not that which was right in the sight of YHWH, 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 YHWH had 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.”

• 2 Chronicles 28:1–4

Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, during his 29-year reign was a religious reformer. He undid most of the evil Ahaz had done, so far as physical things were concerned. He ordered the Temple to be cleansed and encouraged the sole worship of YHWH.

Hezekiah’s son, Manasseh, ruled for 55 years(!) and turned from YHWH to paganism:

“[Manasseh] did that which was evil in the sight of YHWH, after the abominations of the heathen, whom YHWH cast out before the children of Israel. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.

And he built altars in the house of YHWH, of which YHWH said, ‘In Jerusalem will I put my name.’ And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of YHWH.

And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of YHWH, to provoke him to anger. And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which YHWH said to David, and to Solomon his son,

‘In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever [olam, for the age]: Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.’

But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom YHWH destroyed before the children of Israel.”

• 2 Kings 21:2–9

The actions of Manasseh caused YHWH to pronounce destruction upon the people of Jerusalem and Judah:

“Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations, and has done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and has made Judah also to sin with his idols: Therefore thus says YHWH God of Israel,

**'Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever hears of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipes a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.'**"

• **2 Kings 21:11–13**

Manasseh deliberately did what YHWH specifically prohibited rulers and people of Israel to do. Manasseh was busy during much of his reign in pursuit of evil — and horror.

**"[Manasseh] did that which was evil in the sight of YHWH, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom YHWH had cast out before the children of Israel. For he**

- [1] **built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he**
- [2] **reared up altars for Baalim, and**
- [3] **made groves, and**
- [4] **worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. Also he**
- [5] **built altars in the house of YHWH [the Temple], whereof YHWH had said, 'In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever [*olam*, for the age].' And he**
- [6] **built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of YHWH [the Temple]. And he**
- [7] **caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom [the Tophet]: also he**
- [8] **observed times [astrology], and**
- [9] **used enchantments, and**
- [10] **used witchcraft, and**
- [11] **dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he**
- [12] **wrought much evil in the sight of YHWH, to provoke him to anger. And he**
- [13] **set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God [the Temple]."**

• **2 Chronicles 33:2–7**

Manasseh committed such horrific sins and evils that he provoked YHWH to impose the final punishment — to expel the people of Judah from the land He gave them, just as He did to the people of the Kingdom of Israel. Surprisingly, After Manasseh was taken captive by the Assyrians, he repented to God. The Assyrians restored him to his throne (2 Chronicles 33:10–17). Manasseh made reforms, but the people were so polluted in their heart that YHWH moved forward with His final punishment — exile to Babylon, as Isaiah prophesied.

Manasseh's son and successor, Amon, did evil also but only reigned 2 years. Amon's son, King Josiah of Judah, removed much of what his father and Manasseh had done. Note King Josiah's reforms:

**"And he [Josiah] brought out the grove from the house of YHWH [the Temple], without [outside of] 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 broke down the houses of the sodomites [male prostitutes], that were by the house of YHWH, where the women wove hangings for the grove.**

**And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba, and broke down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man's left hand at the gate of the city. Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of YHWH [in the Temple] in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.**

**And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, [so] that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech."**

• **2 Kings 23:6–10**

Nevertheless, God through Jeremiah and other prophets continually warned the kings, rulers, and people about what would happen to Judah:

**“For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, says YHWH: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it. And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, [Why?] to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which [1] I commanded them not, [2] neither came it into my heart.**

**Therefore, behold, the days come, says YHWH, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place.”**

• *Jeremiah 7:30–32*

**“And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell you, And say,**

**‘Hear you the word of YHWH, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus says YHWH of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, which whoever hears, his ears shall tingle. Because they**

- **have forsaken me [YHWH], and have estranged this place [the Temple], and**
- **have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and [they]**
- **have 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 [1] I commanded not, [2] nor spoke it, [3] neither came it into my mind.**

**Therefore, behold, the days come,’ says YHWH, ‘that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter.”**

• *Jeremiah 19:2–6*

Note the first two names of the valley; and the third name it will be given. YHWH is saying they were foolish for thinking He wanted anything like what they have done. Jeremiah the prophet says YHWH will do to Judah what He did to the northern Kingdom of Israel:

**“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. ...**

**But they set their abominations in the house [in the Temple], 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 their 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.**

**And now therefore thus says YHWH, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof you say, ‘It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon [1] by the sword, and [2] by the famine, and [3] by the pestilence;**

**[Later ...] Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.”**

• *Jeremiah 32:32, 34–38*

The prophet Ezekiel, a younger contemporary of Jeremiah, wrote about God’s judgments looking back to when the people of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah could have changed their ways, before their destruction:

“Moreover you have taken your sons and your daughters, whom you have borne unto me, and these [children] have you sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of your whoredoms a small matter[?] That you have slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them? ...

Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, ‘Thus says the Lord YHWH; Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me.’

For when I had brought them into the land, for which I lifted up mine hand to give it to them, then they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering: there also they made their sweet savor, and poured out there their drink offerings.

Then I said unto them, ‘What is the high place whereunto you go?’ And the name thereof is called Bamah unto this day.

Wherefore say unto the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord YHWH; Are you polluted after the manner of your fathers? and commit you whoredom after their abominations?’

For when you offer your gifts, when you make your sons to pass through the fire, you pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be enquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, says the Lord YHWH, I will not be enquired of by you. And that which comes into your mind shall not be at all, that you say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone.”

• *Ezekiel 20:20–21, 27–32*

Ezekiel chapter 23 also deals with human sacrifice, comparing the sins of the people of Israel and Judah in their whoring after people from heathen nations and idols of their impotent gods.

“They have committed adultery, and blood is in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through the fire, to devour them.

Moreover this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths. For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house.”

• *Ezekiel 23:37–39*

Whether the acts were done within the Temple (which is likely, given the depravity of Israel and Judah’s sins), or whether they sacrificed their children and then went to Solomon’s Temple, the crime was the same to God.

### *Christ’s Death Was a Human Sacrifice*

Most of you probably realize the fact that Christ’s death was a human sacrifice. God the Father sacrificed His son Jesus, the Son of God and the first creation of God. It was decided between the two of them before the foundation of the world. The Passover was a symbol of the human sacrifice of Jesus. The lamb sacrificed at the Passover was a symbolic substitution for the true Passover, Jesus Christ.

John the Baptist twice said of Jesus:

“... John sees Jesus coming unto him, and says, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world’ ...

Again the next day after John stood, and two of his [John’s] disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he says, ‘Behold the Lamb of God!’ And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.”

• *John 1:29, 35–37*

One of the best-known passages in the New Testament testifies to the Father’s sacrifice of His Son:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

• *John 3:16–17*

Paul wrote to the Corinthians about Christ’s sacrifice: “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7).

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

• *Romans 8:32*

In the year of Christ’s crucifixion, Caiphas the High Priest for that year spoke to a council of chief priests and Pharisees about the trouble Jesus was causing among the religious leaders and the people:

“... it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.’ And this spoke he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.”

• *John 11:50–53*

Later, Paul tells us:

“By which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”

• *Hebrews 10:10–12*

### ***Only Christ’s Sacrifice Has Value Before God***

All other offerings and sacrifices in the Law of Moses are symbols of just one offering, that of Christ Jesus:

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through [1] sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and [2] sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

• *1 Peter 1:2*

The self-sacrifice of Jesus is the only valid “human” sacrifice. All other human sacrifices are horrible sins, distortions of the sanctification of Jesus. Those doing such things will receive grievous punishment for what they have done, and their consciences will be devastating to them. God can and will make good come out of sin and evil. In fact, through Christ Jesus, glory comes to every human being, and glory to God will result.

“Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils [demons]; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”

• *1 Timothy 4:1–2*

The seducing spirits will cause more slavery, more human trafficking, and more human sacrifice all encouraged and done on purpose — to offend God and Christ, and to diminish the image and likeness of God within every human. Despite everything man and spirits (little “gods”) will do, all from God through Adam will be saved. All will have full knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4):

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe. These things command and teach.”

• *1 Timothy 4:9–11*



All spirits will be reconciled to their Creator God:

**“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross [*stauros*, upright stake], by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”**

• *Colossians 1:19–20*

Christ’s sacrifice and offering of Himself was for your benefit and for my benefit. His offering was given in full agreement with YHWH, His Father in heaven. That sacrifice is sufficient to save every human being. It is your destiny to become a mature child of God like Christ (1 John 3:2).<sup>7</sup> Note how Christ is both an offering and a sacrifice.

**“Be you therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given himself for us [1] an offering and [2] a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.”**

• *Ephesians 5:1–2*

Christ’s offering — on our behalf — is said to be fragrant to God His Father. Jesus was not a burnt offering, but His offering/sacrifice was nonetheless “sweet-smelling” to God. It was accomplished when Jesus died. It was presented after Jesus was resurrected and He presented and sprinkled His own blood to His Father at the divine throne. We come back full circle to the first human sacrifice of Cain and Abel before the altar in Genesis chapter 4. **“Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel”** (Hebrews 12:24).

David Sielaff, September 2020

### **Two Index Lists in John M. Robertson, *Pagan Christs: Studies in Comparative Hierology (1911)***

The active links below take you to the pages in Robertson’s book. The links are geographic, cultural, religious, and topical information about human and child sacrifice. They show the worldwide extent of the evil and sinful practice of human sacrifice. Robertson did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ nor in the historic reliability of Scripture. Take that into account when reading the text of his book.

**Sacrifice — human**, disused in prosperity, [64](#); revived in disaster, [65](#), [140](#); forms of, [105](#) ff.; in Greece, [60-1](#), [123](#), [129](#), [135](#), [139](#); in Egypt, [61](#), [123](#), [129](#), [135](#); Phœnician, [61](#), [64](#), [124](#), [126](#), [129](#); Polynesian, [61](#), [122](#), [150](#) n., [151](#), [154](#), [156](#), [189](#); Japanese, [61](#), [127](#), [183](#); in Dahomey, [61](#), [136](#), [270](#); Chinese, [61](#), [366](#); Hebrew, [64](#), [65](#), [107](#) n., [124](#), [149-50](#), [158](#) ff., [168](#) ff., [186](#), [189](#); Athenian, [106](#), [127](#); in Uganda, [107](#), [125](#) n., [155](#); at Benin, [107-8](#), [135](#), [138](#) n., [151](#), [154](#); in Sumatra, [116](#), [126](#); in Nigeria, [132](#), [134](#), [136](#) n., [150](#); to the Rain God, [135](#); to the Nile, [135](#); in Malabar, [138](#); in Brazil, [350-1](#); American, [106](#), [122](#), [183](#), [350](#) ff.; Mexican, [119](#), [151](#), [271](#), [360](#) ff.; Peruvian, [366](#), [378](#); Khond, [108](#) ff.; universal, [122](#) ff.; Albanian, [125](#); to Zeus, [123](#), [125](#); to Jupiter, [128](#), [129](#); ancient Mesopotamian, [128](#); Persian, [123](#); Roman, [128-9](#); Arab, [126](#), [129](#); Rhodian, [137](#); analogous to executions, [135](#); evolution of theory and practice of, [138](#) ff., [156](#), [186](#) ff., [209-13](#), [361](#); Teutonic, [151](#); to Dionysos, [123](#); to Kronos, [126](#), [137](#); to Melkarth, [126](#); to Mithra, [126](#), [312](#); Scythian, [127-8](#), [269](#), [270](#); to the sea, [129](#) n., [183](#); in Bombay, [119](#); African, [122](#), [132-3](#), [151](#); Malay, [122](#); Indian, [122](#), [127](#); Russian, [122](#); Maori, [122](#), [365](#); Aryan, [122](#); Slavonic, [123](#); in modern Greece, [125](#); by Catalinarian conspirators, [125](#); in Gaul, [137](#)

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<sup>7</sup> For all intelligent non-human beings in God’s creation, their destiny is to be reconciled to YHWH (Colossians 1:20; Philippians 2:10–11). They will not become children of God, so far as we are told in Scripture. DWS