

That The World May Know - Prophets and Kings - Session 1: Innocent Blood (Part 1)

Questions To Think About

1. How would a historian 150 years from now describe our culture's values and life priorities? How might that historian evaluate the current status of the battle between good and evil?
2. Today, many of us really want to "succeed" in life and will sacrifice a great deal in order to achieve personal benefits. Yet innocent people around us can be harmed by our choices. How does striving for personal success or gain harm other people? What are your own experiences, or friends' experiences that show what might happen?

What Did The Video Say To You?

1. Which images from the video made the most powerful impression on you? Why?
2. What thoughts are foremost in your mind as a result of seeing this video?
3. What did the Israelites and Canaanites hope to gain by sacrificing their children to Baal?
4. Do you agree that there are some remarkable similarities between our culture today and the culture of the Israelites when they worshiped both Baal and God? What are those similarities?
5. What was God's response to the Israelites' worship of Baal? Focus on the sacrifice of infants.
6. What would God's response to child sacrifice be today?

The Battle Between Good and Evil

1. What do the following Scriptures reveal about God's motivation for wanting His people to control and influence strategic places such as Megiddo?
 - a. Isaiah 43:12
 - b. 2 Kings 19:14 – 19
2. What did King Solomon do at Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer? Why did he do that?
1 Kings 9:15 – 17
3. Megiddo has come to represent the battle between good and evil – the battle to influence culture. Consider the ways in which that battle has been highlighted by events at Megiddo.
 - a. What does the "high place" at Megiddo, where Baal was worshiped, symbolize in that battle?
 - b. What great defeat for God's people took place at Megiddo?
2 Kings 23:29
 - c. What is the significance of the Jewish author of Revelation locating the most decisive battle of the ages at Megiddo?
Revelation 16:12 – 16
4. Jesus, who grew up within a few miles of Megiddo and the Valley of Jezreel, made a profound impact on His culture. How did people respond to Jesus' actions?
Matthew 15:29 – 31

God Has His Limits

God loves His people and is very patient with them. Sometimes, however, He cannot tolerate any more sin and brings judgment against those who spill innocent blood. Review some of Israel's history to see how God responded to the faithful and unfaithful kings of His people after the nation split into two parts—Israel (the ten northern tribes) and Judah (the two southern tribes)

1. Hoshea of Israel
2 Kings 17:1 – 18
2. Hezekiah of Judah
2 Kings 18:1 – 8
2 Chronicles 31:1
3. Manasseh (Hezekiah's son)
2 Chronicles 33:1 – 17
4. Amon (Hezekiah's grandson)
2 Chronicles 33:21 – 23
5. Josiah (Hezekiah's great-grandson)
2 Chronicles 34:1 – 8
2 Chronicles 34:30 – 33
2 Chronicles 35:25 – 27
6. Zedekiah 2 Chronicles
35:11 – 20

Mixing Righteousness with Evil

Soon after entering the Promised Land, the Hebrews had to choose whether they would worship the God of Israel or the fertility gods of the Canaanites, or both. Often the Hebrews wavered between the two: first serving God, then sacrificing to Baal and Asherah, and sometimes worshipping both.

1. Even before the Hebrews crossed the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land, some of them had begun to worship the Canaanite gods. How did this come about? What was God's response?
Numbers 25:1 – 9
2. What does each of the following passages reveal about the impact of pagan worship practices on Israel's culture and on God's dealings with His people?
 - a. Judges 10:6 – 16
 - b. 1 Kings 10:23 – 24
1 Kings 11:1 – 11
 - c. 2 Chronicles 33:1 – 13
 - d. Jeremiah 19:3 – 6
 - e. Ezekiel 23:36 – 39 (Oholah and Oholibah are names for Israel and Judah)

Worship Practices of the Canaanites

The Canaanite religions can generally be categorized as fertility cults. In addition to seeking to appease the gods through sacrifices (sometimes human), the Canaanites practiced many types of sexual perversion as part of the worship of Baal and Asherah (aka Ashtoreth).

1. What do the following verses reveal about the practices involved in the worship of Canaanite gods?
 - a. Deuteronomy 7:5 – 6
 - b. 1 Kings 14:24
 - c. 1 Kings 22:46
 - d. Deuteronomy 23:17 – 18
 - e. Isaiah 57:5 – 7
 - f. Ezekiel 16:20 – 21
 - g. 1 Chronicle4s 5:25
 - h. Hosea 4:10 – 14
2. What did the Hebrews who worshiped Asherah have the audacity to do?
2 Kings 21:7
2 Kings 23:7
3. What image did God use to describe Israel and Judah's pursuit of the Canaanite gods? What message was He communicating by the use of that image?
Jeremiah 3:6 – 14
4. What image did Ezekiel use to describe Israel and Judah's worship of the Canaanite Gods?
Ezekiel 23:1 – 4
Ezekiel 23:35 – 39

References

Numbers 3	1 Chronicles 5
Numbers 25	2 Chronicles 31
Deuteronomy 7	2 Chronicles 33
Deuteronomy 12	2 Chronicles 34
Deuteronomy 18	2 Chronicles 35
Deuteronomy 23	2 Chronicles 36
Judges 3	Isaiah 43
Judges 10	Isaiah 57
1 Kings 9	Isaiah 65
1 Kings 10	Jeremiah 3
1 Kings 11	Jeremiah 7
1 Kings 14	Jeremiah 19
1 Kings 22	Ezekiel 6
2 Kings 16	Ezekiel 16
2 Kings 17	Ezekiel 23
2 Kings 18	Hosea 4
2 Kings 19	Matthew 15
2 Kings 21	Revelation 16
2 Kings 23	