



## The Baal Cult, High Places, & Child Sacrifice During the Reigns of Ahaz, Hoshea, & Manasseh; Religious Syncretism is Satanically Inspired: “Playing the Cretan”

The next uses of “*Molech*” and “pass through the fire” are found in 2 Kings. The first is:

**2 Kings 16:3** - Ahaz walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and even made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had driven out from before the sons of Israel.

Ahaz’s reign began some eighty years after the death of Ahab. What Jezebel brought into the Northern Kingdom Ahaz took to the depths of child sacrifice as king of Judah. Twelve years later, Hoshea became king of Israel. His regime was so evil that it brought the fifth cycle of discipline upon the Northern Kingdom. The Assyrian army under King Shalmaneser, brought the horrors of Israel’s idolatry to a halt. The worship of Baal and Asherah had finally led to child sacrifice:

**2 Kings 17:16** - And they [Hoshea *ha-shē' a*] and the citizens of Israel] forsook all the commandments of the Lord their God and made for themselves molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah and worshipped all the host of heaven and served Baal.

**PRINCIPLE:** The Scripture declares and history confirms that when the restraints of divine prohibitions are ignored or rejected by a client nation, the souls of its citizens and leaders quickly turn to evil. The resultant loss of ethics and morals soon define the disposition of the people and immoral acts betray their loss of thought as their motto becomes *vox populi, vox Dei*: the voice of the people is the voice of God.

**2 Kings 17:17** - Then they made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire, and practiced divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking Him.

The king of Judah who was probably the worst offender was Manasseh. His tawdry tale is told in:

**2 Kings 21:2** - Manasseh did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord dispossessed before the sons of Israel.

**v. 3** - For he rebuilt the high places [בָּמָה *bama*] which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshipped all the host of heaven and served them.

**v. 4** - And he built altars in the house of the Lord, of which the Lord had said, “In Jerusalem I will put My name.”

**v. 5** - For he built altars for all the hosts of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord.

**v. 6** - And he made his son pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and used divination, and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord provoking him to anger.



**v. 7 -** Then he set the carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the Lord said to David and to his son Solomon, “In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever.”

Manasseh’s father Hezekiah had rid Judah of the Baal cult’s “high places.” This word needs to be explored because it defines the meeting place for the cultic worship of Baal:

**בָּמָה** *bama* - “place of worship”

This originally referred to the place of legitimate exercises practiced by the Israelites who did not have access to the Tabernacle or Temple.

These locations were converted into centers of cultic worship beginning with Solomon (1 Kings 11:7).

These *bamas* were expanded during the divided monarchies beginning with King Jeroboam I of the Northern Kingdom and King Rehoboam of the Southern Kingdom. The newly instituted application for these topographic formations is explained by:

**Botterweck, G. Johannes and Helmer Ringgren (eds.). *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Rev. ed. Translated by John T. Willis. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 2:141-42, 144:**

**בָּמָה** *bama* has the following meaning in the Old Testament: (1) “ridge,” “high ground”; (2) “cultic high place”: refers to the form of the cult place which rises above the surrounding terrain; and (3) “mound.” (p. 141)

Each *bama* was furnished with an altar for offering sacrifices which was a most important element. The altar was either built of stones separate from the *bama*, or was made by the builders as a portion of the *bama* itself.

Besides the altar, the most important furnishings of the *bama* were a wooden pole: *asherah*, which could occasionally be a live tree, a symbol of the goddess of fertility. (p. 142)

Since the central sanctuary in Samaria and the temple in Jerusalem were at times given over to foreign gods or to their images and cults, for centuries the *bamas*, which were spread out over the whole land, championed the Yahweh religion primarily, in spite of their inclination to support a syncretistic cult.

The prophets recognized the great danger of a syncretistic religion and cult practices, which were represented by the presence of an *Asherah*, “sacred pole,” beside the altar of Yahweh. Old Canaanite fertility rites with their immoral practices were kept alive in conjunction with the *asherah*. Other Canaanite practices like child sacrifice also appeared, which were carried on in these very cultic institutions that Israel had taken over from the Canaanites. (p. 144)

**NOTE:** Islam claims to reject all forms of idolatry yet it is evident in its religious exercises. Every Muslim must, at least once, go to Mecca, visit the Kaaba, and bow down and kiss the Black Stone.

Absent cultic altars, Muslims are not prevented from engaging in child sacrifice. Fathers willingly encourage their sons to become homicide bombers on behalf of Allah against Jews and Christians.



To the usual collection of altars, oracles, and idols, Manasseh added the worship of the stars, a practice specifically forbidden in:

**Deuteronomy 4:19 - Beware, lest you lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them.**

This is the introduction of a seventh-century B.C. version of astrology into the spiritual morass of Judah. The word “astrology” combines the Greek word for “stars”: *ἄστρον, astron*, and “speech”: *λόγος, logos*, thus “astrology,” the “speech of the stars.” This is in opposition to “astronomy” which combines the word for stars with the word for “study”: *νομία, nomia*, thus “astro-nomy”: the “study of the stars.” The former is associated with the condemned practices of witchcraft and divination and practitioners such as mediums and spiritists. A summary of this new problem, also associated with demonic influence, is provided by:

**Keil, C. F. & F. Delitzsch. *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: The Books of the Kings*. Translated by James Martin. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), 469-70:**

To Baal- and Asherah-worship, Manasseh added as a third kind the worship of all the host of heaven. This worship differed from the Syro-Phoenician star-worship, in which sun and moon were worshipped under the names of Baal and Astarte, and was pure-star-worship, based upon the idea of the unchangeableness of the stars in contradistinction to the perishableness of everything earthly. This star-worship was a later development of the primary star-worship in which the stars were worshipped without any image in the open air or upon the housetops, by simple contemplation, the oldest and comparatively the purest form of the deification of nature, to which the earlier Arabians and the worshippers of the sun were addicted. Incense was offered to the stars, with the face turned towards the east, upon altars built upon housetops or within the temple. This burning of incense took place not merely to the sun and moon, but also to the signs of the zodiac and to all the host of heaven, *i.e.*, to all the stars; by which we are no doubt to understand that the sun, moon, planets, and other stars were worshipped in conjunction with the zodiac, and with this were connected astrology and augury [divination from omens].

The ascendancy of Baalism in both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms is an example of ambassador demons influencing Jewish kings to allow the syncretism of Judaism with the heathen religion of their Phoenician neighbors.

Before going on it will help for us to define the word “syncretism” for its etymology adds an interesting slant to our subject:

***The New Oxford American Dictionary, s.v. “syncretism”:***

The amalgamation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought.

**Hook, J. N. *The Grand Panjandrum*. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1980), 126:**

**Syncretism.** In religion, syncretism may be the gradual changes of belief and practice that result at least in part from interaction with other religions. It may also be any reconciliation or combination of beliefs between two religions, and by its opponents may be considered an illogical, senseless compromise.



The satanic strategy during the divided kingdoms of Israel was to inspire the syncretizing of Judaism with Baalism. Ambassador demons were assigned to Samaria to influence Ahab's politics and inspire his marriage to Jezebel, the Phoenician princess. The rationale sold to Ahab was one of political advantage but it was a demonic rhetorical veil. The hidden agenda was to put a patron of Baal inside the Palace at Samaria from where Jezebel could promote the influx of Baal worship into the Northern Kingdom. The initial stage of the plan was syncretism but the complete destruction of the worship of *Yahweh* was the ultimate objective.

The etymology of "syncretism" provides an interesting and helpful illustration for our study. The word is a compound of two Greek words: the preposition:

**σύν, sun:** "with," plus the noun **κρητισμός, krētismos:** Lit: "with Cretan behavior."

What is Cretan behavior? We get help from:

**Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Bible Dictionary*. 3d ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), 227:**

**Crete:** a large island in the Mediterranean. The ancient notices of their character fully agree with the quotation which Paul produces from "one of their own poets" in Titus 1:12: "The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, (lazy gluttons)." The classics abound with allusions to the untruthfulness of the Cretans; and it was so frequently applied to them that *krētizein*, "to act the Cretan," was a synonym to *play the liar*.

This word *krētizein* is a derivative of the Greek word **κρητίζω, krētízō** which is defined by:

**Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 995:**

**κρητίζω, krētízō,** to speak like a Cretan; play the Cretan, i.e., lie.  
**κρητισμός, krētismos,** Cretan behaviour, i.e., lying.

Thus **σύν, sun,** plus **κρητισμός, krētismos** become an idiom for deception and lying. As an example from classical literature, Plutarch in his *Aemilius Paulus* \i-mil' ē-us pol' us\ describes how Perseus was deceived by Oroandes of Crete:

Perseus secretly persuaded Oroandes of Crete, master of a small vessel, to convey him and his treasure away. He, however, **playing the true Cretan**, took in the treasure, and bade him come, in the night, with his children and most necessary attendants, to the port by the temple of Ceres \sir' ēz\; but as soon as it was evening, set sail without him. (*Great Books of the Western World*, 14:224.)

One of Lucifer's major strategies is religious syncretism, or in modern parlance, ecumenicalism. He used it to destroy legitimate worship of **YHWH Elohim** by the Jews and, presently, of Jesus Christ by Christians. But he also will syncretize heathen religions for his nefarious schemes. An example is the con job one of his ambassador angels worked on Abu al-Qasim Muhammad, the founder of Islam in the early seventh century A.D. This demon influenced Muhammad to eliminate all the deities from the Arabian pantheon with the exception of the moon god called al-Ilah, or Allah.



By doing so he set up a system by which he could challenge the Trinity with a false monotheism. Into his revision of Arabian religion he brought plagiarized and misquoted excerpts from both the Old and New Testaments and proclaimed the result as the most immediate revelation from God called the Qur'an \ku-ran'.