



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## Only the Jesus' Gospel Saves the Soul

"And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." Mark 16:15-16

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. " Romans 1:16

Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with someone else is bringing "glad tidings of good things" for them. Sin is a disease that is killing more people than all physical diseases combined. Each person has two parts, body and soul. (Matthew 10:28) Have you noticed all of the 24/7 fitness centers popping up all over the Shoals? Mankind is concerned about their physical bodies but showing no concern at all for their spiritual soul that is perishing because of sin. And though billions all over the world do show some concern for their soul, they are adhering to "another gospel" that will not save their soul, so their soul continues to perish.

Paul told Timothy, "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 2Timothy 4:2-4

Only Jesus' good news will save a soul.

STACY

## 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 the children of Israel began their trek toward the Promised Land, God began to prepare them for the godless influences of the Canaanites whom they were to displace. In the above chapter, God 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" (v.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 to most of us. And yet the warning against *"passing your children through the fire to Molech"* is repeated again and again (**Lev.18.21; 20.1f; Deu.12.29f; 18.10**). God's passion for life had already been vividly illustrated when He had first commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering and then refused to allow him to kill his son (**Gen.22.1f**). 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.

According to the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Vol.III, p.2074-2075), Molech was likely a god of Semitic origin, adopted as the national god of the Ammonites (under the name “Milcom” – **1 Kings 11.5f**). It appears probable that there was a close connection between Baal worship and that directed toward Molech, as both are associated with the common religious rites of the various 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. And while there remains some discussion as to the particulars of such “worship”, there is little doubt as to its existence. 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 upon an altar-pyre. Incidentally, in the ancient accounts of the Phoenician people of Carthage, the children sacrificed to Molech were burned alive. “The image of Molech was a human figure with a bull’s head and outstretched arms, ready to receive the children destined for sacrifice. The image of metal was heated red hot by a fire kindled within, and the children laid on its arms rolled off into the fiery pit below” (ISBE, Vol.III, p.2075). 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 captivity by Babylon.

It’s difficult for me to envision such a practice. The thought of taking one of my little girls 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 even contemplate. And yet such were the demands of idolatry, and untold numbers of people – people not unlike us – engaged in such atrocities. 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 – too civilized, cultured, enlightened. 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. Makes you wonder about our “advanced” society, doesn’t it?

But even more troubling is this consideration. All of those children, horribly 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 all of the children in our day who are being sacrificed upon the altars of education, or entertainment, or 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 all kinds of gods are more important than the true and living God. We groom them and polish them and train them and direct them to 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?