

# Baal Worship

By Frank Zimmerman

I'VE done some thinking in the recent weeks about Baal worship, and why it was so pleasing and easy for Israel to fall into. Baal, after all, just means “Lord” so the fact that we don’t use the word “Baal” today, does not mean that Baal worship does not exist.

Baal worship had some pleasing things that commended it:

- You were suddenly in harmony with the nations around you, who had a similar religion, so you could reach them more easily with the truth;
- You still believed in one God, creator of heaven and earth;
- It was “family religion”: there was also Ishtar, the female attributes of the deity, and the lovely child Tammuz, whose birthday was December 25;
- You could worship God “in the spirit”, which meant pretty well under any tree or grove or on a hill, rather than being confined to the “legalistic” laws of the temple service with their “narrow” restrictions.
- You could occasionally fall into sin, but that was okay, because Baal was a forgiving God...or perhaps the sin was not really sin, because Baal himself did those things. In any case, those “troublesome restrictions” that caused so many to go through agonies trying to please God, were suddenly swept away. So there was a type of freedom in that way.

On the other side, real inward purity and heart obedience were missing, and the nation went down, down, down, until they were captive, scattered, and pretty much destroyed.

There were other negatives to Baal worship, such as the ruler-ship of feelings over reason (shown by the whoredom with the daughters of Moab at Shittim: *Numbers* 25), some terrible errors about God’s character (shown by the priests at Mt. Carmel who

cut themselves trying to “awake” their god: *1 Kings* 18), mistreatment of the poor by the rich (shown by Ahab and Jezebel’s attempt to steal Naboth’s vineyard: *1 Kings* 21), and a lack of real heart salvation.

These dangers are still present today. And as long as there is a struggle between righteousness and sin, there will still be a danger of Baal worship.