

The Religion of the Canaanites¹

The Israelites, in most cases, were to destroy the tribes of the Canaanites and related tribes entirely, killing all women and children, and even to the point of destroying their idols and the gold and silver in these idols. What we need to look at is just exactly what was the religion of these people like, that God would require such complete and drastic action.

1. Their religion was an open attack upon right man/right woman:
 - a. In the name of their deities, virgin women often gave their virginity away as a part of their religious services.
 - b. There were male and female prostitutes who were actually a part of the worship service. They were known as ch^édeshim and ch^édeshoth.
 - c. Their sacred places, sometimes called the groves and sometimes called the high places, were nothing more than religious brothels. People consorted with their prostitutes openly as a part of the religious service.
 - d. Large phallic symbols were found throughout these groves and high places.
2. Their religion was an open attack upon the divine institution of family:
 - a. Their gods demanded to be worshiped with human blood.
 - b. Parents sacrificed their sons and daughters to the idol Molech. Their children were actually burned with fire, or immolated, before the idol Molech.
3. We have a precedent for the destructive influence of religion upon Israel. When Moses was receiving the Law from God on Mount Sinai, the Israelites below were fashioning a golden calf to worship, which corresponds closely to the Egyptian worship of Apis (Ex. 32 Num. 25).
4. Molech was the idol-king of Canaanites and of various other tribes in the Land of Promise. This is a counterfeit of the relationship between God and Israel. Molech has already been covered in a previous doctrine in Lev. 18:21
5. We have already studied Baal and the degeneracy of the religious practices devoted to him in Num. 22:41.
6. Israel would learn local agriculture from the Canaanites. The agriculture of the Canaanites was closely aligned with their heathen cult practices—the total destruction, or devotion, required by God, was to keep these practices from becoming a part of Israel's life. Eventually, Israel did fall into the nature worship of these former inhabitants.
7. Astarte (also known as Ashtoreth) was the goddess of sexual passion. She is identified with the Greek and Phoenician goddess, Aphrodite. Rites of worship to her were sexual degeneracy. *Asherah* is possibly the name of a distinct goddess and it might be the name of the poles, stems or stumps which represented her. In this chapter we have covered the **Doctrine of the Asherah**

Degeneracy and the Land of Promise

1. One of the things which we have noted is that there have been two situations where God called for essentially what amounted to genocide in the Land of Promise. Most people have a difficult time with that.
2. The first time is found in Gen. 18–19. Abram and Lot separated, Lot going into the beautiful valley and Abraham taking what was left (Gen. 13).
3. When Y^éhowah appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre to tell him of his coming son, God also told Abraham that the area of Sodom and Gomorrah were to a point where they had to be destroyed. Abraham was not commanded to destroy these cities, but he was warned that they were about to be destroyed, as his nephew Lot and his family lived in the city limits (Gen. 18:1–20).
4. This began the prayer of Abraham to God concerning the righteous and the wicked—that is, when God destroyed an area like Sodom, were the righteous destroyed with the wicked? Abraham began with a 50 person pivot and asked if there were 50 people in the town, would God still destroy it? Gen. 18:23–24.

¹ Most of this information comes from *The Emphasized Bible*, pp. 259–260. When I complete the separate doctrines of Molech and Baal, I will need to embellish this somewhat.

5. Then Abraham kept reducing the number in the pivot until he got to ten, and Y^ehowah agreed that if there were ten believers in the city, then He would not destroy it (Gen. 18:25–33). Abraham stopped here, because this would have been the number of people in Lot's family (?).
6. Two angels then went to Lot and said that they would spend the night in town. Lot urged them strongly not to go into the midst of town, but to stay with him Gen. 19:1–3).
7. However, enough people saw these two angels walk into town that they came to Lot's house in the middle of the night and demanded to commit homosexual rape of the two new men in his house. This is how degenerate things had become. These men were more degenerate than what is found in most prisons. See Gen. 19:4–5.
8. Lot pleaded with them, even to the point of offering his two daughters to them. This is how far things had gotten out of hand. There was no law to appeal to—Lot's only alternative, as he saw it, was to offer his own daughters to these men to placate their homosexual lust (Gen. 19:6–8).
9. Then men forced their way inside, intending to homosexually rape the angels inside (Gen. 19:9–10).
10. The men were struck with blindness in the courtyard of the house (in going through the first door into the courtyard); they could not find the doorway into the house (Gen. 19:11).
11. Lot was ordered to remove his family, his wife, his daughters, their husbands, and his sons. This should have been ten people. However, the only ones who left the city were Lot, his wife and his two daughters (Gen. 19:14–17).
12. Lot and his daughters were allowed to escape to a small town Zoar; however, his wife was turned into a pillar of preservation when she looked back at Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:18–23). If you don't fully understand that, you may know some women who have friendships with homosexual males and they value these friendships. Lot's wife focused on their personalities and their relationship to her, and ignored the fact that these men were rapists.
13. The morality of Sodom and Gomorrah had a profound affect upon the daughters of Lot and they initiated incest in order to continue their family line (Gen. 19:30–38).
14. Now, throughout the Land of Promise, we have the Canaanites and the various other families who are engaged in the religious practices just discussed.
15. The why is easy to explain. There are two factors working here. The human factor is that good land and good weather, although it does not attract degeneracy, it attracts people who often tend toward hedonism (we see that in southern California and Florida). When human prosperity and environment are not enough, they seek happiness in other ways. An area like this would be in high demand, so those who eventually conquered it would tend to be vicious, war-like people.
16. The other factor is the demonic factor. Satan was present when God laid out to Abraham what land was his and Satan worked on the peoples of the area, developing Satanic counterfeits of what is divine. Instead of animal sacrifice, he promoted human sacrifice; instead of right man/right woman, he promoted prostitution within the religious services; instead of the God-king of Israel, there was the idol king, Molech, who represented Satan. Furthermore, Satan wanted to populate this land with the biggest, most dangerous, most de-humanized peoples possible, so as to bet secure the land from Israel's ownership. Whatever God's plan is, Satan will counterfeit and/or overthrow it.
17. Finally, and quite importantly, God gave the degenerates of the land approximately 440 years to clean up their act before He came in and destroyed them. Recall that famous verse [God is speaking to Abraham]: "[And, as for you, you will go to your fathers in peace; you \[Abraham\] will be buried at a good old age. Then, in the fourth generation, they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorit is not yet complete.](#)" (Gen. 15:15–16). As we will see, God did not require that every inhabitant of the Land of Promise be destroyed, and He further proscribed very particular geographical boundaries within which were the limits of those things devoted to Him.