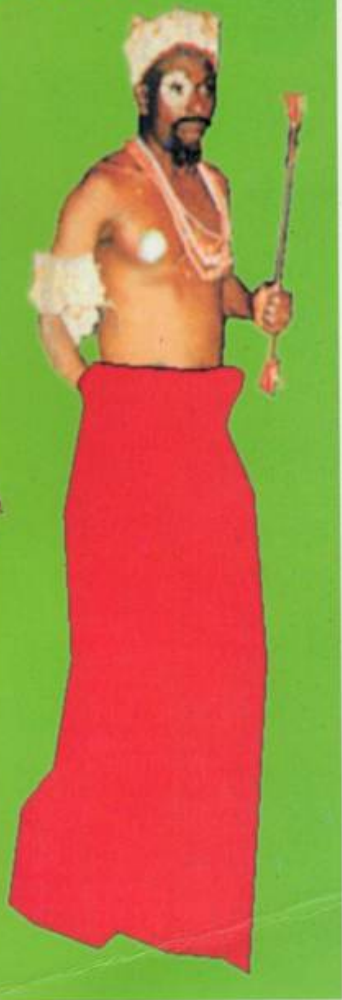


PRIESTHOOD

Christ or Traditional

WHERE DO YOU STAND?



Chijioke Nwauche

INTRODUCTION

Priesthood: A priest is one who brings offerings. Every individual is a priest. One is either a priest unto God or a priest unto the devil. Every individual ministers offerings to spirit beings, which fall into two categories:

- God Almighty, the El-shaddai, the Governor of Zion and Possessor of Heaven and Earth.

- The Devil, who is also the Antichrist, Satan and Heylel (erroneously rendered as Lucifer in some Bible translations, while the original literal translation in Hebrew calls him Heylel – a name similar to Gabriel and Michael).

Unbelievers, function as priests unto the devil, seeing that the devil is called the god of this world who demands and receives worship, life and suck (2 Cor. 4:4-6). On the other hand, Christians as believers are called to be a Royal priesthood, priests and kings and a nation of priests unto our God (Exod.19:5;1 Pet. 2:9 and Rev 1:6). This priesthood is essentially carried out through the daily lifestyle or personality of the individual. This is not a Sunday-Sunday affair. These offerings are made upon an altar which is clearly the heart of the individual. It is also evident that Christians can worship or give life/suck to the devil by submitting to the devil through idols/images in the heart, mind, emotions, desires and will. This worship of the devil happens through deception thus:

- Innocent actions, dispositions, attitudes which may be used as an opening and channel of worship unto the devil. Eve is a classic example.
- Outright rebellion. Saul is a classic example.
- The high places of besetting sin in our hearts (Altars) e.g. Solomon loved many strange/outlandish women.
- Ancestral inheritance of a nature e.g. lust and anger.
- Initiation/dedication e.g. first daughter.

The Bible uses the lifestyle and culture of the pagan nations of the world and the inhabitants of Canaan such as Amorites, Moabites, Assyria, Egypt and Babylon to give us an insight into these priesthood. Among these nations, the devil was worshipped through an organized system or religion in which Satan was worshipped as Baal: the owner or the lord or husband or one who makes all things fertile and gives life to everything in creation.

This system of worship found in the Bible is also the same in our contemporary culture and communities.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

The scriptures are very clear in stating the thought and practice of the priesthood of every believer. In the very beginning when the LORD God brought out the children of Israel from Egypt, he stated his intention in very clear terms in Exodus 19:6

“And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation....” Every Israelite was to be a priest unto God. However, in the dispensation of the Old Testament and under the temporary Aaronic priesthood, only a few people (specifically, the children of Aaron amongst the children of Levi) could function as priests. This is in direct contrast to the situation in the New Testament in which the original intention in God’s heart is actualized and God relates to every believer on the basis that he or she is a priest unto God:

1 Peter 2:5

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

1 Peter 2:9

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

Rev. 1:6

“And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Rev. 5:10

“And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Rev. 20:6

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

One of the greatest errors in the church today is the operation of many believers under the order of the old testament, Aaronic order, of “clergy and laity” while in actual fact God expects us to operate under the New Testament priestly order of Melchizedek as seen in the above scriptures. We function in this priestly order of Christ ONLY when Christ Jesus, the head of the body becomes our LORD and head in actual practical terms. This means we enter into this priesthood by death or beheading: we lose our lives and suffer the loss of all things for the Excellency of Christ and his priesthood.

The more we die to the self life within and the worldly life without, we become partakers of this heavenly priesthood on earth and we find authority and liberty to reign on this earth as kings and priests. This dimension of life and immortality which is presently working in some within the body of Christ will soon explode to fullness within the first fruits company or wise virgins and eventually usher them into the experience of the first resurrection wherein the kingdom life and dominion of the millennial reign of Christ on earth would be introduced and established. Thus, the earth is to be the theatre of these climatic events and experiences. This is the reality of the priesthood of Christ: to rule and reign on earth now and forever as kings and priests with the power of an endless life according to a never changing priesthood.

We can only enter into these experiences through holiness: through separation from the idolatrous Baal and Ashtoreth worship which is embedded in the culture, tradition and customs of our people which is similar to the traditions and culture of the Amorites and the Canaanitish people.

It is hoped that this book would enlighten, strengthen and encourage God's people in this end times to rise against this traditional priesthood, and to begin to function more perfectly as priests unto God after the order of Melchizedek – a never ending or changing priesthood with the power of an endless life and an eternal generation.

Thus, the Christian's spiritual warfare is basically a fight against Baal worship that has as its components, the fight against sin in the flesh, the world (culture) and Devils (fallen Angels and Demons – disembodied spirits of unsaved men 2 Cor. 5:1-8). In this regard, there are three dimensions of this warfare that believers need to be aware of:

- Baal worship as originated in Babel and subsequently in Canaan as a result of God's judgement on Babel (Gen. 11).
- Baal worship in our culture (village, city, tribe and Nation) as an extension of Baal worship in Babel just as was the case of Canaan the land of promise (Note : The soul of man is the ultimate land of promise since the Salvation of our soul is the end of our faith – I Peter 1:9; Heb. 10:39).
- Baal worship in our soul (mind, emotion, will and desire) which dates back through genealogy to Babel/Nimrod and Adam – our great grand forebear or parent.

Baal worship in all its ramifications constitute an important part of dead works. In Heb. 6:1-5 the scripture tells us that the foundation

of the fundamental principles of Christ has to do with **repentance from dead works and faith unto God**. Repentance from Baal worship within our Souls - Mind (thought, ideas, impressions/images), Desire, Emotion and Will is crucial since this worship within our soul constitute our basic personality and lifestyle. We need to repent from participating in the culture of the land since the culture of the land is brought about by the summation or the coming together of the souls of the inhabitants of the land under the covering, control and government of the familiar spirit (at the family level), ruling spirit/principality (at the village, community, town/city and National levels) and by Baal (Satan) at the global level.

OUR FOUNDATION

Our foundations continue to be weak and our faith continues to be feeble when we have not fully dealt with the issue of dead works and Baal worship as shown in Luke 6:46- 49, by the man who built his house (faith) upon the sand – no proper foundation on Christ. We cannot serve God and mammon.

Baal is reputed to be the owner or possessor of the earth. In other words, he is the god (Baal) of this world. (I Cor. 4:4). Thus, he desires to possess, indwell, inhabit, manifest his being and nature within the soul nature of men in the same manner as Christ desires to be our husband and possessor of our soul and being. This is actually what happened right from the beginning in Ezek 28 and Isaiah 14 where Satan purposed to sit upon the heart of man (throne of God) as God. (II Thess. 2:4: No wonder the scriptures say that Baal (Satan) is the Anti-Christ).

Thus, Baal worship is essentially a spiritual thing and principally operates and manifests within the soul of man. Therefore, for one to deal with the issue of Baal worship and culture, it means the breaking up and the afflicting of ones soul (personality and lifestyle), which is essentially what the Day of Atonement. (Lev. 23, Deut. 16) is all about. Thank God that this is the Day of

Atonement, for the Church has entered the Last Feast (spiritual experience) of Tabernacles of which the Day of Atonement is a composite part. This is the day of Jubilee, long spoken and prophesied about, when all who truly desire to be cleansed of the filthiness of the spirit (Heb 10:22; 2 Cor 7:1) and be filled with the nature of Christ in fullness (tabernacles) within the souls, would actually enter such glories in Christ. Amen. (Lev 25, Lk 4::18)

TRADITIONAL PRIESTHOOD

Baal worship is at the root of the traditions, customs and culture of the land. Traditional priesthood is the sum total and channel through which the people of the land give worship unto Baal who is Heylel (Lucifer, devil, Satan, Great Dragon).

For a long time now, the line of separation between Baal worship, hence traditional priesthood on the one hand and the true worship of Almighty God through Christ Jesus the Lord on the other has been blurred even to the extent that in certain circumstances and circles, the two forms of worship and life style have been merged or mixed into one which mixture is called **BABYLON**.

At this time, it is certain that the cup of the abomination of this wicked and rebellious system has come to the full (Rev. 16: 17-21), hence God is judging it in the same manner in which God's judgement upon the Amorites was delayed until their cup was full (Gen. 15: 16). The Amorites were one of the seven nations of Canaan who were Baal worshippers (Gen 10: 15-19). Canaan - a Land flowing with milk and honey represents the inheritance of the believer in Christ –which is the salvation of our souls. Our portion, our lot, our inheritance and the promise of life that we have in Christ is the coming forth of the nature of Christ within our souls: that is the manifestation of the character and fruit of Christ within our souls; That is, the establishment of his throne upon the altar of our hearts and his government and kingdom within our souls for the scripture says that “*the kingdom of God is within you*” Luke 17:20-21.

Even though the judgment of the Amorites and the Canaanites were delayed for a long time (more than four hundred years), the people of God were able to possess this inheritance in the time of Joshua, David and Solomon (Joshua 14:1; I kings 9:20 –21)

Thus, the burden of this word at this time is that the cup of the iniquity and abomination of the Amorites has come to fullness, hence it is NOW the time for God's people to possess their possessions and to experience TOTAL deliverance from the traditions and culture of Canaan which is synonymous with our own heathenic, rebellious and ungodly culture.

CHAPTER 1

THE ORIGIN OF BAAL WORSHIP

Baal worship is the same thing as partaking of the traditions of the land such as the traditional marriage of paying bride price and dowry, partaking of the village festivities and celebrations, Ishtar (Easter) and Christmas celebrations, worshiping the image of the Beast (Rev: 13) or submitting to the spirit of the Anti-Christ who is Satan. To be able to fully appreciate what this really means and how it applies to every individual (both believers and unbelievers), it is necessary for us to trace the origin and spread of Baal worship. In this regard certain principles stand out:

- ◆ Babel as the birthplace of Baal worship with Bel personified as Nimrod (being the High priest and mighty one Gen 11).
- ◆ The dispersion and spread of this rebellion to every corner of the earth including Canaan and Africa.
- ◆ The Canaanites were Baal worshippers.
- ◆ Baal worship being the foundation and motivating force of the Canaanite traditions and culture.
- ◆ As in the case of the Canaanites, the traditions and culture of every tribe and ethnic grouping are based on Baal worship.
- ◆ Our personalities hence the soul nature of every individual is basically inclined and fixed to practice Baal worship in man's day to day lifestyle as a result of the fall in the garden of Eden, when man's nature was changed from what God originally made it to be.
- ◆ This lifestyle (culture and traditions) unto Baal is opposite and contrary to the normal Christian lifestyle and calling.
- ◆ Babylon (**ungodly mixture**) is the result of man's attempt to satisfy both of these incompatible lifestyles (Man cannot serve God and Mammon).

NIMROD AS BEL

Nimrod was a mighty one in the earth. He was a rebellious one. He was contrary to God and righteousness. Gen 10:10 records that

“the beginning of his kingdom was Babel”. He was a kingdom builder. Infact, he originated a new tradition of men dwelling in cities and kingdoms. Part of this new tradition was a new form of worship in which he was to be worshipped as Bel: The Son of God. He was Baal: the owner, the husband man, the master and ruler. He ruled and reigned over the people. He was a might hunter and a mighty one before the Lord (Gen 10:9). He hunted and manipulated the souls of his worshippers. Thus, we see that from this man originated many practices including witchcraft (the domination, manipulation and control of the souls of men), the concept of kings, Lords, dukes and chiefs (one man rule or individuals ruling and reigning over others in a community/kingdom of men). He also originated the occult religion in which there was an institution of priests which was organized in a hierarchical order. These priests kept the mysteries and only those initiated into this cult of worship could have an assess into the mysteries of this new tradition.*

The head of the order of priests was the papal Lord or pope. The priests wore a special kind of dress and headgear including the symbol of the fish god, and the “tonsure” (circular shaving/styling of the hair in reverence to the sun god). They were required not to marry – the oath of celibacy, etc

In this occult religion, the people spoke one language and were united in the one purpose of worshipping Baal. The worship of many idols and gods (polytheism) including the worship of “mother and child” (the worship of Nimrod (the little one) and his mother, Semiramis) was a very basic tenet of this tradition. This belief was translated into reality through the building of the city and tower of Babel as recorded in Gen. 11. The tower itself was a temple of worship dedicated to the worship of the Hosts of Heaven especially the topmost floor.

*Refer to the book: *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop
(published by Loizeaux brothers Neptune, New Jersey, USA).

Archaeological findings confirm that there were images or idols at every floor and upon its walls and especially the top floor. The city itself was to be indwelt purely and wholly by Baal worshippers: people who did not recognize the Almighty God and were in rebellion against God. Thus, the basis of the life style/culture and tradition of this city of Babel was Baal worship. Therefore its ceremonies and practices regarding the following originated from and were dedicated to Baal:

- ◆ Childbirth
- ◆ Work ethics
- ◆ Sexual practices
- ◆ Marriage
- ◆ Death rituals
- ◆ Temple worship
- ◆ Mode of dressing, etc.

Thus, the daily life style of the people was patterned to give worship to Baal and the Hosts of Heaven who actually were Satan and his host of fallen Angels and Demons.

Thus, we can safely conclude that the tenets of this new tradition and worship as shown in the building of this new kingdom/city and its tower or temple of worship are as follows (based on Genesis chapter 10 and 11):

The Involvement Of The Mind In The Rebellion Against God

This is shown by Gen. 11 Vs 6b: “*which they have imagined to do*” In the original Hebrew, the word “imagined” is “Zamam”: which is to muse, think, consider, meditate or to plot. It speaks of an active working of the mind to resolve to take an action. Thus, this rebellion was originated in the mind of Nimrod who subsequently got the minds of the people overwhelmed and influenced through his soul hunting ability or his witchcraft. Thus, the image of this rebellion and of their idolatry as was represented in the tower (temple) of Babel was sealed upon their minds. Their idolatry was basically within their minds even though they gave it

a physical manifestation in their lifestyle, culture and tradition and in their worship at the temple/tower of Babel. This then is the basis of the image of the beast, the sealing on the forehead (mind) and the mark of the beast which Revelation 13 talks about; all of which refer to idolatry of the mind. Hence, it is only the mind of Christ, the conversion of the mind which the word of God brings and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus in the power of the Holy Ghost upon our minds that can bring total liberation to us. **Thus, the major focus of Baal worship, culture and tradition is upon the mind, the heart and the inward man.** No wonder that God's measurement of our worship is also centred upon the state of our mind, heart and the inward man (I Sam 16: 7; Lk 10: 27, and Ps. 51: 6; 16-17). Indeed, the sacrifices of God is a meek and a contrite heart.... *"and Thou desirest truth (righteousness) in the inward parts"*.

THE WORSHIP OF THE HOST OF HEAVEN (ZODIAC)

Gen. 11:6 *"let us build us a city and a tower whose "top" may reach unto heaven"*. The word here translated "top" is the Hebrew word "Rosh" meaning top, head, summit, highest point or level, chief level or cornerstone. Thus, the chiefest level or the highest or most sacred altar of this tower was in the top floor which was dedicated to the host of Heaven. The findings from archaeological studies and antiquities indicate that the symbols of the Zodiac which was invented by Nimrod (through his other name of Zoroaster)* and which represented the worship of the Host of Heaven were represented on this temple in the form of images. The chief of these images of the Heavenly host was the Sun. Thus, Baal worship is the worship of the sun god and other Heavenly bodies. In the spirit, this speaks of the worship of the Antichrist (Satan) and his host of fallen angels and demons. Paul in writing in I Cor. 10:19-22 makes us understand that an idol is nothing but for the devils that get life/worship through it, hence they give strength to it that men may be bound even the more.

*Refer: *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop.

Therefore, we see that worshipping of idols and images (both within the mind and physical idols) actually translates to devil worship. It is the devil that gets the worship. Indeed, the worship of any god through religion other than the worship of God through Christ is worship given to satan, since, he is actually the inventor of the world's religions through various men over time, just as he used Nimrod to originate Baal worship: Rev 9:20-21, Lev 17:7, Deut. 32:16-17, Ps. 106:35-39.

We then see that the cardinal point about the object of Baal worship has to do with reverence to the Antichrist who is the devil. The devil desired to be THE CHRIST but this position was given to Jesus - Ezek 28:14-17; Isaiah 14:12 -15. He wanted to rule over the stars of God, to ascend above the heights of the clouds (of witnesses) and to be like the most high. **Thus, through Baal worship, the devil projects his thoughts and himself into the thoughts and therefore into the mind, and the culture and traditions of the people.** His ultimate aim being to exercise dominion over men just like Christ. He is the Anti-Christ who will eventually tabernacle himself within an individual, a person soon to be manifested upon the earth. The antichrist spirit will also find expression in a body of people at the local, national and global setting - One World Church: thus, the one world church is going to be a reformed and modern version of Baal worship of Nimrod as shown in Gene. 11. Just as they were united then, so is the world going to be united in this form of worship which is sophisticated in that it will be taking place in the minds of the people as was the case back in Babel. Thus, the mark or seal of the beast is a spiritual marking upon the minds/hearts of men in which they submit to the images of the Antichrist being projected into their minds to make them adopt certain life styles such as fashion, sexy (power dressing) attitudes, and relationships (e.g. single parenthood, homosexuality, lesbianism) which the devil would deceive men to think and accept as being trendy and the "in-thing". Men would be deceived to believe that they have not arrived or attained social acceptability until they behave in a certain manner. This is the

worship of the image of the beast spoken in Rev 9, 13, 14, 15 and 20.

In Rev. 17 and 18, we see this one world church or Harlot system/woman going into a league/covenant or fornication with the one world government in which the woman riding the Beast is this Harlot system or church (for woman in the spirit speaks prophetically of church) while the Beast speaks of a mixture or system of kings and kingdoms (Governments) since the beast had seven heads, ten horns and ten crowns. It is a government of mergers and coalitions and compromise. No wonder that the current political and economic doctrine among the nations is globalization and mergers.

This one world church is not necessarily going to be manifested physically in one building but it will involve all humanity in a spiritual sense. It is essentially a spiritual reality within the minds, hearts and souls of men which would then have a varied multifaceted manifestation in the physical through various religions, politics, economics, world trade, fashion, sexuality and pornographic trade, information technology and mind science, medicine and human cloning etc. Babylon indeed has many abominable names (natures) and daughters. May the lord deliver his own at this hour. Amen.

Carnality, Self And Materialism: - Gen. 11: 4 says “*Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth.*” One of the major tenets of Baal worship is “let us make us a name”. This speaks of carnality, self and pride. Baal worship is very much steeped in sensual gratification and materialism. One who is given to satisfying every sensual desire or urge is actually involved in this baal worship without knowing it. Herein lies the great deception that has taken many, even in the church: that one is deceived into submitting to baal worship while believing that one’s action is harmless or pleasing unto God. Eve fell for this deception in the Garden of Eden and the devil is yet to change his tactics.

In looking at the phrase “Let us make us a name”, there are certain basic principles that need careful examination:

Pride: Pride is at the root of baal worship. This is not surprising as pride is the very nature of satan: Ezek. 28:17 says “*thine heart was lifted up, because of thy beauty, thou has corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness*”. He was so full of himself that he could not submit to God and instead sought to be “like the most high”. The depth of his pride was outstanding hence the manifestation of the spirit of pride in men’s heart is a recognized major form of baal worship which gives life to Satan. “Let us make a name” is the motivating force of the pride of man, even as the scripture in I John 2:14-15, speaks of the “pride of life” as being one of the three pillars of worldliness. Worldly organizations worship pride. Tribal, ethnic, national and family pride all flow from the fountain of the pride of life which is baal worship. It is not surprising that one of the major reasons for God’s judgement on the heathen nations was their pride: Nebuchadnezzar was judged for his pride (Dan. 4: 19-37), the pride of Moab (Ezek. 16), the iniquity of Sodom (Ezek. 16:49) etc. Thus, pride is a major form of Baal worship and is the basic reason for upholding the traditions and culture of the Land. Each time the culture and traditions are upheld and submitted to, the pride of the people is further strengthened and the people or person becomes more alienated from God.

The root of pride is the elevation, upliftment of self and ultimately satan, as he originally desired at the time of his fall. It has no room or intention to give honour, worship and praise to God. No wonder the scripture in 2 Thess. 2:4 says “*That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God (Temple of human being/man) showing himself that he is God.*”

Baal worship is designed to usurp the position of Christ in the heart of men and in the body of Christ. The purpose of Baal worship through traditional priesthood (traditions and customs) is to subvert and diminish the glory, relevance, and honour due to Christ. This then is that spirit of Anti-Christ spoken of in I John 4:3 and II John 7.

Rebellion: In Gen. 1:28, the scriptures state very clearly that man was to replenish the earth, man was to multiply upon the face of the earth and have dominion over it. But in Gen 11: 4, we see the scripture saying that Nimrod and his rebellious people of Babel rose up in defiance and rebellion against this principal counsel of God and declared that they would rather form a kingdom “Lest we be scattered upon the face of the earth.” They knew God’s commandment regarding this issue but brazenly, openly and consciously revolted against it. The judgement of God had to come and God had to fulfill his original counsel and purpose by “*scattering them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth*” (Gen 11.8).

Here, we see the spirit of rebellion at work. The word “rebellion” is a derivative of the word “bel” which is the name of Nimrod. Thus, his nature is that of rebellion, the same applies to other derivative words from “bel” such as rebel, bellicose, belligerent, belly and Babylon which all speak severally and collectively of war, violence, hell stubbornness, cantankerous, revolt and apostasy from the truth, light, righteousness and God. No wonder the scripture says in Rom. 8 that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God. Rebellion is at the root and foundation of Baal worship and invariably the driving force of customs, traditions and culture of the land. Another scripture that brings this out very clearly is Roman 1:18 –32:-

Verse 21 “... *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened*”.

Verse 23 “... and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.”

Verse 25 “... who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the creator.”

Verse 28 “... And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind.”

Verse 32 “... who knowing the judgement of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

This scripture captures quite clearly the spirit of rebellion that works amongst idol and Baal worshippers. It underscores the point that this worship began and is centred according to vs. 21 “on their vain imaginations and their darkened hearts”. This sounds familiar – this is the same picture portrayed by Paul in 2 Cor. 4: 4 – 6 where he says that the god of this world (Heyl, Lucifer, Satan, Antichrist and the Great dragon) “*had blinded the minds (imaginations) of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine to them*”.

Again, in saying “let us make us a name” the spirit of rebellion moved them to exalt themselves rather than God. Rebellion exalts man, man’s empire in the Church (ministries, gifts and callings) but the true sons of God have only one passion: exalting and glorifying God in their souls, (mind, will, emotion and desires) spirit and the temple of their bodies.

Finally, when they said unto themselves “let us make a name, lest we be scattered”, they were bringing forth, practicing and establishing one of the cardinal principles of traditional Canaanite and heathen culture. This was the principle of maintaining the name of the family, ethnic grouping, tribal or national group at the expense of everything else. The social bondings we find in families or tribal settings are geared towards achieving “let us make us a name”.

Customs and traditions are upheld, deified and worshipped and observed so that the name, fame and pride of the family, tribe or ethnic nationality is upheld. This is the basis of the principle of the first daughter and first son/male child worship. This is also associated with family/ethnic ties, affiliations and linkages. The purpose in all of these customs and traditions is to “raise up seed” so that the name of the family/tribe is not let down or exterminated.

It also speaks of the “kingdom building spirit” in that the desire to achieve prosperity justifies whatever ungodly means employed in the process of “making it” or making a name: becoming popular, famous, prosperous and affluent. This is the new craze in the church today. Men of low character (‘sons of Belial’) who have been put into the ministry by the spirit of Jeroboam (1kings 12:28-33) and Jezebel (just as these did in Israel) now teach boldly that gain is godliness and that “money answereth all things”, of such the scriptures say “*whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things*” – Phil. 3:19. But in actual fact this new craze and doctrine is a refined form of Baal worship – dressed up in sheep’s clothing so that the simple and undiscerning would be deceived. May the Lord deliver his own from this vomit that is now being fed unto his people. Amen.

Fear, Intimidation and Control (Witchcraft): One of the very major similarities and connection between Baal worship and culture, traditions and customs of the land is that of fear, intimidation, manipulation and control (witchcraft). This is shown in the passage of Gen. 11 v 4 where it is recorded “*let us*”. This phrase is an all-embracing one. It does not imply a suggestion but a command, a rule and an injunction and a covering cast over the whole inhabitants of the city of Babel. All inhabitants had to submit to this rule. They were intimidated, cajoled and manipulated in their soul and inwards to submitting to this rule. Fear was a potent instrument in the hands of Nimrod and is still a

potent weapon in the devil's hands today even as he intimidates God's people with the fear of death, fear of tomorrow and fear of the unknown.

The phrase "let us" speaks of public opinion and the force and power of the mass of people or humanity that were involved in Baal worship. Anyone not willing to go along will have to stand against the tide, to swim against the tide of public or accepted or majority opinion. This is the crux of the matter in standing against the established customs, traditions, tenets of the land. Here, many believers and ministers buckle and crumble. There is no spine to stand against public opinion because of the compulsive force and threat of "let us". O that God would raise an army in this land in this end of time, that would be emboldened (just as Shedrach, Meshack and Abdnego) to defy the devil and his cohorts of Baal worshippers who abound in our families, villages and we dare to add, in the church and pulpit today.

An individual cannot stand against, let alone overcome traditions. It takes a body of people who are united by the spirit of Christ and driven by obedience to the revealed word of Christ to teach principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God. This is where the principle of the city of refuge comes into play (Joshua 20:1-9; Deut. 19:1-14). The avenger of blood or the supervising spirits and demons unleashed through a curse or spell to rope in and punish every erring inhabitant of Babel cannot cross the barrier of the blood of Jesus to trespass into Christ (the city of refuge) as long as Jesus Christ ever remains the unchangeable priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

"Let us" speaks of intimidation, which opens up the door to fear and the individual ends up being manipulated and controlled, the working of which is the same as witchcraft. 2Tim 1:7 says God has not given us the spirit of fear and timidity (intimidation), but of love, boldness and of a sound mind.

Culture, traditions and customs are always kept alive in the community of men through the combined effort of fear, intimidation, manipulation and control by the heads of the families/compounds, elders, chiefs, village priests and in general by the inhabitants of the land who have become covered and subdued in the past. This is the typical setting of traditional priesthood which is Baal worship.

Nimrod who is also called Bel, Zoroaster (Babylon), Osiris (Egypt), Bacchus (Greek) and Tammuz (God of fertility and sexuality) was a master hunter before the Lord. His hunt included the souls of men (witchcraft) and was quite formidable. No wonder, that all and sundry capitulated and bowed in worship. This phenomenon is the same as that spoken of in Rev. 13 in which all the inhabitants of the earth wondered after the Dragon with a great admiration saying who can “make war with the beast?” This seduction is so powerful that even the prophet in Rev. 17:6 was also carried away with admiration for the whore that was riding the beast with seven heads and ten horns.

Submission to traditions and invariably to Baal worship is worship given to devils and Satan and it begins by succumbing to the spirit of intimidation, fear and control in our inward parts – the mind and imagination. Thus, the mark of the Beast is sealed upon the forehead (mind and imagination) through the instrumentality of fear and intimidation: “let us”. Thus, when a young lady succumbs to the projections upon her mind of goodly images of the latest wave of fashion (based upon pornographic principles, offerings and dedications) that enables her to show off her curves, rounds and all, she has been sealed with the mark (character, nature/rebellion) of the beast. When she does dress up herself with such “pornographic” or “power dressing”, she proceeds to receive the mark of the beast upon her hands which speaks of her works, lifestyle and conversation. The same applies to submitting to the marriage rites of paying bride price and dowry, burial rites etc. We shall touch more on this later on in this discourse.

Thus, the marking of 666 – the mark of the Beast of Rev. 13 is actually the fullness of this type of sealing upon the soul and individuality of a person such that the person's lifestyle has been changed through rebellion to one of a beastly lifestyle which is the bringing forth of carnal natures and behaviours and fruits in his person which are patterned after fulfilling the lusts of man and of the flesh. These lusts work through the lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eyes and the pride of life. This is Baal worship – fulfilling the lusts/desires of the human drives and cravings which give one pleasure. This is the worship of pleasure, comfort, sensuality and materialism. Man and self are enthroned upon the person's mind and imagination. This is idolatry and ungodliness par excellence. It is spiritual harlotry which is fornication with the whore – the worldly systems of man and the devil.

CHAPTER 2

THE DISPERSION OF BABEL

In the previous chapter, we were able to examine the worship, priesthood and traditions of the rebellious city of Babel which is put forth in the scriptures as the origin of Baal worship in the post-Noahic dispensation (which includes our dispensation). We saw very clearly that this worship of the antichrist (who is the devil) through the medium of idols, images, Nimrod (Bel, Zoroaster, Osiris, Bacchus and Adonis) and his mother whom he sacrilegiously and incestuously married and who is variously called Astarte, Ashtaroth, Venus, Cybele, Aphrodite, Ishtar and Queen of Heaven (mammy water spirit) is based on the following tenets:

- ◆ Involvement of the mind (soul) as the altar upon which this rebellion against God is carried out.
- ◆ The worship of other gods – Hosts of Heaven (Zodiac).
- ◆ Carnality, self and materialism (which incorporates pride and rebellion)
- ◆ Fear, intimidation and control (witchcraft).

In this chapter, we shall trace the manner in which this traditional form of worship and rebellious lifestyle have spread throughout the whole world including Africa and Nigeria. This will serve as a basis for establishing that the so-called heathen practices, culture, custom, traditions and lifestyle found in this “dark continent” of Africa originated from Babel and is actually Baal worship, which is the worship of Heylel. The same may then be said of the various cultures and traditions of the peoples of the World – American, European and oriental traditions and customs all have their roots in Babel.

The scriptural basis for this assertion is found in the book of Genesis. Let us look at them:

Gen. 11: 7-8 states “Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. [8] So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of All the earth: and they left off to build the city.”

In this scripture, we see very clearly that God’s judgment fell upon Nimrod and his company of Baal worshippers. In effect, God scattered them upon All the earth, they were dispersed away from Babel. They evidently did not repent hence they all carried this rebellious form of worship in their hearts to the various parts of the globe wherein they were scattered by God’s wrath and judgment.

Hence, it becomes apparent after careful examination that all the customs of the peoples of the world have some similarities, such as blood covenants, worship/deification of the dead, human sacrifice and mother/child worship etc. which are all important basic components of Baal worship.

The next scripture is found in Gen. 10 vs 25 “*And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was ‘Peleg’; for in his days was the earth divided...*”. To fully understand the import of this scripture, we need to state that Eber was the grand child of Shem (Noah’s son) through his son Arphaxad. Thus, while Arphaxad was a second generation descendant of Noah, Eber was of the third generation while Peleg belonged to the fourth generation. Interestingly, while Cush (the son of Ham – Noah’s son) was a second generation descendant of Noah, Nimrod (the son of Cush) was of the third generation (just like Eber, the father of Peleg) meaning that his (Nimrod) children were of the fourth generation as was Peleg. Thus, Eber and Nimrod were contemporaries and of the same generation. Hence, one can then see that while Nimrod was of the rebellious Nature, the descendants of Shem including Eber were godly. This being the case, it is then understandable why this man (Eber), being moved by the strength and magnitude of God’s wrath and judgment upon the wicked, rebellious and idolatrous works of his cousin – Nimrod (who were both of the

same third generation) decided to name his son “Peleg” – meaning Division: for in his days (of his birth and life time) were the earth divided. This he did as a way of both remembering and celebrating this judgment of God upon evil and unrighteousness.

This division of the earth was two dimensional: (a) The first one was the confounding of the speech of these Baal worshippers and adherents of culture and traditions. Hence, they drifted apart and became separated into groups – ethnic, tribe and nations. Thus, tribalism and ethnicism and the nations all originated and derived their existence from Baal worship and are supervised by the spirits of pride, rebellion, violence, division, strife and contention. The living testimony of the goings on in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, Middle East and the Niger Delta are confirmatory of these workings.

The second one is the well documented geographical fact that this division affected the structure of the physical earth such that God caused the earth mass to drift apart giving rise to the continental earth masses that we still have today. Hence, people were scattered from Babel into America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia/New Zealand. An understanding of basic anthropology would show that these continents were inhabited by indigenous tribes or aborigines whose culture were heathenic and polytheistic (worship of many gods/hosts of heaven). These people consulted and worshipped the spirits of their ancestors (spiritism) and always appeased them in one way or another such as libation which is actually a drink offering and has a similarity to a molten image which is made by pouring liquid metal into a given mould representing the form of an idol.

Thus, the basic culture of the native populations of the various continents are similar (2kings 17: 24-41) and derivable from Babel and it is Baal worship and idolatry. Thus, the Incas of Mexico, the Celts and Saxons of Great Britain, the Druids of Europe, the Ogun and Amadioha worshippers of Africa/Nigeria all believed

and worshipped the sun God. The same may be said of the similarity between the Mammy water worship of the riverine communities of Africa, whether in Nigeria or in Congo (Makossa dances) and the weeping for Tammuz and Ashtaroth/Astarte worship of the Amorites and Moabites (both of Canaan), which entails the worship of the goddess (spirit) of pleasure, ecstasy, revelry, fertility and sex through lust, licentiousness, temple or sacramental fornication/orgies, masturbation, pornography etc.

It is clear, indeed very clear that the whole world did indeed drink from one fountain: the cup of the fornication of Great Babylon, the Harlot, the Whore that has corrupted the Nations and that reigns unrighteously over the people or the waters (Rev. 17-18).

Thus, we see that Baal worship did spread from Babel into the neighbouring region of Canaan, Africa and eventually the whole world e.g. the Roman Catholic missionaries found to their consternation and embarrassment that mother/child worship was already in existence in all the continents including Asia (NEPAL) according to the work of Alexander Hislop (*The Two Babylon*) which took him 40 years of prayers and research to write.

CHAPTER 3

CANAANITE CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

As we shall see and establish from the scriptures, the Canaanites were basically heathenic, ungodly and were Baal worshippers. The worship of Baal amongst the inhabitants of the land of Canaan originated from Babel/Nimrod as was clearly established in the previous chapters. In this chapter, we shall go into the word to establish the details, workings and principles of Canaanite culture and traditions as it relates to Baal worship, which is its basis and driving/motivating force. This would then enable us to reassess and evaluate the culture of our own people which invariably also originated from Nimrod/Babel.

It is appropriate at this point to bring out some basic information about Canaan:

- Canaan was the youngest recorded son of Ham (Gen. 9:18; 10:6) while Ham was the youngest of the three sons of Noah – Japheth, Shem and Ham (Japheth being the eldest) (Gen. 9:22,24; 10:21).
- Canaan was cursed by Noah (his grand father) as a judgment upon Ham (his father) for seeing the nakedness of Noah – Gen. 9:20-26. Thus Canaan became a cursed person and his habitation inherited this curse even though it was a land flowing with milk and honey.
- Canaan had several children – his first born son being Sidon. The others included Heth (Hittites), Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites etc. (Gen. 10: 15-19).
- The rebellious, ungodly and wicked cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim were neighbours to Canaan – Gen. 10:19. It is conceivable and indeed true that the wickedness of these cities that warranted their being

overthrown by the fierceness of God's anger and judgment must have infiltrated and influenced the people of Canaan – Gen. 13:13. Indeed they had a similar culture of worship (Baal worship) and lifestyle (sodomy and lesbianism) in so much that God also targeted the Amorites (one of the prominent sons of Canaan) for similar judgment – Gen. 15:16.

- The Canaanites were soon to acquire a new set of ungodly neighbours in the person of Moab and Ammon. These two were children born out of incest (the mating of the two daughters of Lot with their father) – Gen. 19:30-38.
- Based on the foregoing, the inhabitants of Canaan were ungodly, just as their neighbours – Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim were exceedingly wicked – Gen. 13:13. Thus their lifestyle, culture, traditions were contrary to God's ways. This prompted God to move Abraham to charge Eleazer (his chief servant) not to take a wife for his son Isaac from amongst these worshippers of Baal – Gen. 24:1-4. There was to be no mingling.

Thus, it is clear that there has always been two types of opposing lifestyles, culture, traditions and worship amongst men:

- ◆ The culture of the ungodly (which is based on Baal worship, sexual uncleanness, pride and rebellion)
- ◆ The culture of the righteous (which is based on the fear and worship of Jehovah, the Almighty God, as patterned after Christ).

These two forms of traditions are clearly opposite, distinct and can never, never be reconciled – Gal. 5:16-19; Rom. 8:1-14. Thus, the Christian, particularly those who aspire to be part of the Bride of Christ (Matt. 25) must not mix or defile themselves with the “dead” or ungodly and worldly culture of Canaan or of our villages or nations – *“Come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you”* – 2 Cor. 6:17.

“... whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God...” “...friendship (mingling with the worldly culture) of the world is enmity with God.” (James 4:4).

AMORITE CULTURE

We shall now proceed to examine these in finer details, the components of the culture and traditions of the people of Canaan, as a mirror of the culture and traditions of our own indigenous tribes/villages, which all originated from Babel and Nimrod:

Sidon (Zidon): Sidon was the first born son of Canaan, and in certain places in scripture, it is spelt as Zidon (1 Chron. 1:13). This city was located on the Mediterranean shoreline and as can be expected, was a major commercial centre. It had a twin city called Tyre (Tyrus is the Latin form of this word – Ezek 28:2) and was separated from Sidon by about 20 miles (32 kilometres) and was situated in the northern part of Israel. It was also a centre of commerce and of great merchants. Both of these cities were part of the inheritance of the tribe of Asher as found in Joshua 19:24-31. The nature, culture, worship, rebellion, activities and judgment of both cities are similar and we shall go into the scriptures to bring these principles out:

Name: The word Sidon (Zidon) in Hebrew means fishes or fishery – one whose power is in the sea or water. The scripture in Isaiah 23:3 “...*the harvest of the river, is her reverence...*” confirms this thought. Tyre (Tyrus) means “Stone” or a stronghold by the sea shore. Joshua 19:29 speaks of the strong city of Tyre while 2 Samuel 24:7 states “*And came to the stronghold of Tyre*” and finally Zach. 9:3 says “*And Tyrus did build herself a stronghold; and heaped up silver as the dust and fine gold as the mire (dust) of the street.*” It is instructive also that both of these cities were to be inherited by the people of Asher.

The children of Asher could not subdue and overcome these people and by prophetic application, the people of God in this last dispensation are still finding it very, very difficult to overcome these natures, spirits and strongholds. We find these happenings in Judges 1:31-32; 2:1-6. Here, we find that the children of Asher could not overcome these territories of their inheritance and eventually mingled with them and served their gods. The word “Asher” means happy, pleasure, fortunate and dainties (Gen 30:13; 49:20). This word shares the same roots with another word “Asherah”, which is a totem pole or a wooden pole symbolizing the pleasures and fantasies that the hordes of Ashteroth worshippers derive in their offerings. This pole represents the phallus or male sex organ and is revered and worshipped as the source and object of pleasure and happiness. “Asherites” in the physical speaks of the people of the tribe of Asher. However, in the spirit, it denotes those phallic worshippers who throng to the altar of “Ashera” to give themselves over to licentiousness and whoredom. Thus, when we compromise with the culture of the land, we would eventually become servants to these natures and spirits. This is confirmed by Rom. 6:16 “...to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin (culture and traditions) unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.”

One of the areas in which the children of Israel compromised and yielded to the people of the land was in the matter of Traditional Marriage: Judges 3:6 “*And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.*” We shall come to this important point later on.

The second dimension of the name, hence the nature of these twin peoples/cities particularly Tyre is related to pride. The Bible shows very clearly that the devil, (Leviathan) is the king of all the children of pride (Job 41:34; Ezek 28:17; Isa. 14:13-15). Thus, any man or people who partake of this nature of pride are actually entering a covenant or re-enacting an ancestral covenant that has a

link to the nature of the devil which is darkness and unrighteousness. Tyre (Tyrus) meant stone or stronghold and by implication, this is related to a nature of stubbornness, rebellion and pride. The king of Tyre was Hiram, whose name or nature meant “High born” or by implication, a proud or exalted one. Ezek. 28:2 “*Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, thus saith the LORD God; Because thine heart is lifted up and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God.”* This nature being also the nature of the devil, invariably reenacted a covenant relationship with unrighteousness and wickedness. Thus, when an individual submits to the culture of Tyre, the spirits and natures that will subsequently manifest in that person would include rebellion, stubbornness (which is similar to witchcraft), pride and ungodliness. When Christians submit to the culture of Tyre/Zidon as manifested in the local culture of our ancestral origins, one of the fruits of this worship is the manifestation of the stronghold of pride, resentment and rebellion against the divine order of God in the body of Christ, in the home and in our relationship with God. God begins to resist our walk and our ways and we become unfruitful - James 4:6.

Thus, when we see these traits of pride, rebellion and unfruitfulness (absence of the fruit of the spirit/nature and character of Christ in our personality), it may not be a simple matter, or something that requires a casual attention. Most often, they are a pointer to a deep seated root of defilement that runs down many generations and natures. It would only take a true heart of repentance unto the lord for God to begin the process of cleansing the loins and breeches of the people concerned.

This brings us to the issue of besetting sins or unclean nature. This also speaks of the matter of linen breeches (Exod. 28) which is the closest/innermost covering/garment of the priesthood. This is actually the foundation of the ministry of righteousness and of Christ (the true bride). Thus, any one aspiring to be a partaker of

the bride of Christ (Matt. 25) must have been a graduate of this school of cleansing.

A besetting sin/unclean nature is an outward manifestation of a deep seated and rooted unclean nature which has an origin in the dark past of unclean natures of the grand parents. Sometimes, this link goes as far back as satan himself. An appropriate example is the relationship of Hiram, the king of Tyrus (Tyre) and Heylel (Satan, Lucifer) as shown in Ezek. 28:1-19. Here, even though the king of Tyrus (Hiram: Highborn, an exalted one, pride) was being addressed, it is quite clear that it is actually the devil that is the target of this judgmental word from the Lord. This is emphasized by verse 13 "*Thou hast been in Eden...*" verse 14 "*Thou art the anointed cherub, that covereth....*" Thus, the nature of pride in Hiram and Tyre had a deep root that originated from the devil himself. The Lord knew it existed, although it was shielded from men such as David and Solomon, who had business dealings (Timber business) with him (1kings 9:11). This root was eventually revealed in the spirit to the prophet Ezekiel. **If we submit our souls to Christ, every bastion and stronghold of the devil within our personalities and natures would be revealed and judged accordingly.**

This is therefore a word of encouragement to all True virgins who are breaking open their soul natures unto the Lord for a work of cleansing, that the Lord is more than able to save us to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25), even as we continue to press on in Him. The foolish virgin is one who does not dig deep enough in building his house as an habitation of God in the spirit. In the matter of besetting sins/unclean natures/attitudes/habits, a casual approach will not be sufficient. This is a call to those at ease in Zion to begin to travail for as soon as Zion travailed, there was a birthing of the oil/nature/fruit/character of Christ within the soul especially in the area of emotions and lusts: which have been denatured, such that it now has as its nature the worship of pleasures and unclean sexual habits. This is the worship of Asthoreth or Astarte or mammy

water spirit. In our modern civilization and computer age society, it is called having fun, being sexy or power dressing or flaunting what you have and it is tragic that these traits have taken root within the church at these end times.

MERCHANDISE OF MEN

The activity and life source of the town cities of Tyre and Zidon was commerce. They were cities of great merchants:

Isaiah 23:2

“Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished.”

Verse 3

“...the harvest of the river, is her revenue; and she is a mart (melting pot) of nations.”

Verse 8

Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth?

Zech. 9:3-4

“And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. [4] Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire.”

Ezra 3:7

“ They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.”

These scriptures and more show very clearly that the people of Tyre and Zidon had commerce as their preoccupation. They traded in all sorts of things and became rich, proud and dwelt at ease. An important aspect of this trade was the trade or the merchandise of men or the souls of men as recorded in Rev. 18:13. This

merchandising or trading in men has to do with captivity and the people of Tyre/Zidon greatly profited from this trade as shown in Ezekiel 27:13:

”Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were thy merchants: they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market.”

Again, this is confirmed by the scripture in Joel 3:3:

“And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.”

Verse 4

“Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompence?...”

Verse 5

“Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things:”

Verse 6

“The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border.”

Verse 7

“Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head:”

These scriptures show clearly that part of the merchandise of Tyre/Zidon was the selling of men. In other words, they brought them into captivity and slavery. Thus, it was part of their culture or lifestyle or commerce to bring men into captivity. Therefore all who partake of this culture will be brought into captivity and bondage particularly as they were a very strong people who were never overcome by the children of Israel. Culture and traditions do actually bring one into bondage particularly that which binds the soul (emotions, desires, will and mind) in fear and servitude of the devil.

When the Bible speaks of the “merchants of the earth” such as mentioned in Rev. 18:13 it is actually addressing this traffic and merchandising of the souls of men whereby men are sold into the

slavery and captivity of the devil when an individual or a people submit to the culture and traditions of the land. The children of Israel in (Judges 3:1-6) dwelt among the Zidonians, submitted themselves to their culture and gods, intermarried with them contrary to the express counsel of God and became defiled and captives. We are not to touch or mix with them – come out from among them, and be ye separate ... what concord hath Christ with Belial, light with darkness.... saith the LORD. 2 Cor 6:14-18.

The scriptures are very clear on this. May the Lord help his people to separate and cleanse themselves from this abomination. Amen.

Dwelt Carelessly: Here, we are going to examine the lifestyle of the Zidonians. In Judges 18:7, it says:

“Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing...” Another scripture that gives one an insight of these people is found in – Ezekiel 26:12

“And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses (temple of idols): and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water.”

Verse 13

“And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard.”

Again, Ezek. 27:24 goes on to say:

“These were thy merchants in all sorts of things, in blue clothes, and brodered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords, and made of cedar, among thy merchandise.”

Verse 25

“The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market: and thou wast replenished, and made very glorious in the midst of the seas.”

Verse 27

“Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war...”

In looking through all these scriptures, the things that come clear about the culture of these people are that of materialism, sensuality, and worship of ease and pleasure. The pursuit of comfort was their prime focus. It is also instructive that their evil virtues were the hallmark of the Babel of Nimrod, Sodom and Gomorrah.

In our modern 21st century computer age civilization and society, these features of worldliness have assumed the highest proportions: pornography is a billion dollar business and is still expanding, the entertainment industry is a giant player in every “happening” economy, while the gates of the lust of the flesh, lust of the eye and pride of life are ever increasing their bellies.

Therefore, our modern culture and that of the peoples gone by such as Zidon and Tyre are similar. The counsel of the Lord is to flee fleshly lusts. The word of God says “*Woe to him that is at ease in Zion*” (Amos 6:1), cursed is the man that trusteth in the arm of flesh, is also the Lord’s judgment on this behaviour (Jerem 17:5-6). Thus, it is clearly disobedience when we mix ourselves with the culture of the land. Jesus Christ our Lord said, a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of the goods that he possesseth (Lk 12:15). It is amazing the extent to which the craze for materialism in the guise of prosperity message, has overwhelmed, defiled and has almost destroyed the foundation of the church.

The church in defiance and rebellion to her Lord is teaching albeit boldly that gain (prosperity) is godliness while the scriptures say the opposite. The Gentile/Canaanite character of lust for materialism and covetousness has crept into the church and has taken hold of the hearts of many “itching ear” believers.

Materialism is a recognized cardinal pillar of Baal worship yet God's people are bowing at its altar. May the Lord deliver his own at this hour. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

THE DEPTHS OF BAAL WORSHIP

We have now come to the crucial point of this discussion on the culture/lifestyle of the inhabitants of Tyre/Zidon. This has to do with the many abominations of their worship of Baal. Our approach here will be to examine in detail, the various segments of this worship which comprised essentially of Baal/Ashtoreth worship, the high places and the groves:

Baal (Baale, Baalim, Baali): Baal is recognized as the chief Canaanite god or deity (1kings 16:31-32; 22:53) whose consort was the goddess Ashtoreth (Ashtaroth, Astarte). The other names of Baal include Be'el, Bel, El. The worship of Baal is associated with the worship of the hosts of Heaven (2kings 17:16). Baal in Hebrew essentially means owner or possessor (master, lord, chief, husband). Baal is also recognized as the sun god: the giver of life. Thus, the primary meaning of Baal is that he is the source of all life (owner/possessor) and secondarily that he is the husband – the owner of the soul or woman (the moon) and the seed giver. In Canaanite legend, he is regarded as being dead during winter (dry season) when all vegetation dry up (he is temporarily dead). He comes back to life in spring/rainy season with life to revive all vegetation. Hence, the beginning of winter (around October 30) is celebrated in the pagan/occult world as the feast of Halloween while the beginning of spring (around March/April) is celebrated as the feast of Ishtar – Easter.

Thus, Baal is worshipped as the god of fertility through ritual marriages and sacramental fornication with temple prostitutes (whores) and sodomites (dogs) in the temple of Baal. This ritual fornication is done to demonstrate the marriage of Baal with Astarte (Ashtoreth) as a way of ensuring the fertility of the earth and its people. The objects of worship in this temple include exaggerated sexual models such as the totem pole (image/asherah)

which represents the male sexual organ (phallus). It is instructive that a similar object is found in Yoruba mythology as ‘Opa Oranmiyan’ in Ile-Ife, in Egypt as the Obelisk (which was transported to the Vatican in Rome). It is also found in the Capitol Hill (Potomac) in Washington D.C. The Obelisk is also found in London and in most church buildings as the tower.

Baal is also worshipped as the god of war and violence, who consorted with Astarte after his victories. It is not surprising that the spirits of lust and uncleanness is strengthened by the spirit of violence and destruction. It comes to defile the individual and the marriage institution. This then is part of the foundation of the besetting sin that plague most believers. A very classic example of this link is seen in the violence in the Niger Delta and the worship of the mammy water spirit and the cultish/idolatrous tendencies of the youths.

Names of Baal: Baal was greatly honoured and revered among the Canaanites, hence they named individuals and places after him such as:

- Names of individuals as found in 1 Chron. 5:5
“Micah his son, Reaia his son, Baal his son,”

1 Chron. 8:30

“And his firstborn son Abdon, and Zur, and Kish, and Baal, and Nadab,”

In our communities, people are also named after the ruling spirit or deity. Such names include “*Nwagbara*” amongst the Ibos which means son of the ruling deity (Agbara); “*Kamanu*” which is also the name of a ruling spirit; “*Oruwari*” meaning House of Juju (the deity) etc.

- Names of places, as shown in 1 Chron. 4:33

“And all their villages that were round about the same cities, unto Baal. These were their habitations, and their genealogy”.

And Judges 3:1

“Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them...”

Verse 3:

“Namely, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in of Hamath.”

Further, Baal was honoured by the localities with different names/meanings:

- Baal-gad (Josh. 11:17): Lord of good fortune.
- Baal-Hamon (Songs of Solomon 8:11): Lord of the multitudes.
- Baal-meon (Num. 32:38): Lord of Habitation.
- Baal-Hanan (Gen. 36:38): Lord of Benignity.
- Baal-peor (Num. 25:2-3): Lord of opening.
- Baal-Berith (Judges 8:33): Lord of Covenant.
- Baal-zebub (2 kings 1:2): Lord of flies.
- Baal-zephon (Num. 33:7): Lord of winter/darkness.

All these are manifestations of the fact that Baal was the sovereign Lord of the Canaanites whom they honoured by naming individuals, villages, cities and mountains after, just as obtains in our own culture. Another important principle that can be seen about Baal is that he had different names in the same place and even in different localities. Name speaks of nature thus this reflects the multi-dimensional nature of Baal. This is exactly similar to the whore (harlot) spoken of in the Book of Revelations chapter 17 verse 5 where it says:

*“And upon her forehead (mind) was a name written, **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**”*

Rev. 17:3

“...And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy...”

Again, Isaiah 47:8

“Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else

beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.”

This woman had many names, natures and children speaking of the need for a detailed and thorough and total work of redemption within our souls. When we are born again, this work has only just begun, for much still remains to be done and requires God’s program of dealing in our hearts at the experiences of the feast of Pentecost and Tabernacles to fully accomplish his will within our souls.^a

Worship of Baal: The veneration, idolization and worship of Baal was done together with the worship of Ashtoreth (1 Sam. 7:4; Judges 10:6). It consisted of various aspects which we shall now consider in some detail:

High Places

Baal worship officially took place in the High place, (2 kings 12:3; Deut. 12:1-4; 2 kings 23:13,15), sometimes called the house of Baal (2 kings 10:20-28). The high place (the Hebrew word is “Bamah”),^b was usually built on an elevation – hill, mountain, stronghold - 2 Chron. 28:24-25. The high place contained the following:

IMAGES

These include several images but the major ones were two:

- Matsevah^c - 2 Chron 33:19. This is a graven image set up in the high place to represent Baal, the male Canaanite deity. They were usually one or more in number and was made of stone – 2 Chron 28:2.

- Asherah’s pillar^d: This is a wooden pole or pillar (Deut. 12:3; Judges 6:26), representing Ashtoreth, the Zidonian goddess of fertility and consort of Baal – Deut.

a: See the book “*Tabernacles: The life beyond Pentecost*” by the author, for more clarification on this matter.

b: Bamah: (Hebrew, Strong’s concordance number 1116)

c: Matsevah: (Hebrew, Strong’s concordance number 4676)

d: Ashera: (Hebrew, Strong’s concordance number 842)

16:21-22, 1 kings 16:33. Sometimes, a special altar was built consisting mainly of this wooden pole, called grove (we shall deal more extensively with this later).

ALTAR

This is a place of sacrifice in the High places of Baal and was usually made of stone – 2 kings 21:3. Thus, the altar (Hebrew word: mizbeach)* was the place of offering and sacrifices, and individuals also had their own private/family altars such as Gideon’s family – Judges 6:25. The offerings/sacrifices made at this altar included:

- Animal sacrifices – Num. 23:1-2; 2 kings 10:24
- Burnt offerings – Jerem. 19:5; 2 kings 10:24-25
- Human sacrifices (child sacrifice) – Jerem.19:5, 7:31-32; 2 Chron. 28:3; Ps. 106:35-40
- Ritual fornication – 2 Chron. 21:11,13; Rev. 2:14.
- Incense – Jerem. 11:13,17; 7:9; 19:4; 32:29; 2 kings 23:5; 2 Chron. 28:4.
- Oath, swearing and covenant – Jerem 12:16.
- Eating things sacrificed to idols – Rev. 2:14.

We shall discuss these in some detail:

Animal Sacrifices: The essential thing about animal sacrifices was the shedding of blood – blood sacrifice. Blood is life and sacred in all realms of heaven. Lev. 17:11 says *“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”* The devil and his realm of darkness **NEED** life and energy. They cannot receive this from the source of all life – God Almighty (the double breasted one or El-shaddai: who is doubly abundant unto meeting and satisfying the **NEED** of life of every creature and being in all of Heaven (Ps. 104) and Hell, seeing they have rebelled against him. Their **only** alternative is to

*Mizbeach: (Hebrew, Strong’s concordance number: 4196).

obtain it from God's creatures, chiefly from men (Gen. 3: 14).

Thus, animal sacrifice provides a medium of giving life to the devil, which energizes his evil machinery of wickedness. The use of animals in Baal worship is universal in every culture and is a token of the life of those who offer them. It speaks of a covenant of blood between Baal and his worshippers. It grants him access into their life based on Roms. 6:13-16; John 8:34.

In the prophetic dimension, the new age movement and the global awareness campaign of protecting the environment and animal rights (over and above the right of human beings and the sacredness of human life) is a manifestation of the veneration and idolatry of animals. Again, it is instructive that in the occult world, some of its important symbols and insignia are those of animals e.g. "the goat of Mendes" or "the demon god" or "the goat head with two horns" (which is a component of the occult symbol of the pentagram), the feather of rare eagles etc.

It is also of import to know that Rock musicians now perform sacrifices on stage: slaughter cats, dogs – all part of giving life to Baal.

HUMAN SACRIFICES

This practice is an abomination unto God but is one of the major cardinal forms of Baal worship, particularly child sacrifice. In Baal mysteries and mythology, it is held and believed and hence practised that the flesh is evil and that burning of the flesh of a human in the burnt offering purges the individual of the "dross" of the flesh and makes one acceptable before the gods. In our modern society, child sacrifice is very, very common and takes place in clandestine forms. Abortion is a major manifestation of child sacrifice. The pro-abortion debate and movement is sustained and financed by satanists, occultists and the new age movement – all agents of Baal, who is Satan. Habitual abortion is also a priesthood unto Baal wherein, the life of the baby is sacrificed unto Baal. The

ritual killing of children particularly in the western world is a well-recognized manifestation of child sacrifice.

In this category would also fall the wicked and weird practices of paedophilia (sexual relationship of adults with children of both sexes). The Roman Catholic Church in the United States is presently being rocked by scandals involving some of its Bishops, some of whom have confessed to abusing teenage altar boys. The booming practice of child pornography is included here. Both of these practices are demon and devil driven, irrespective of whatever men or social scientists may say. Pornography, particularly child pornography is a channel and priesthood which ministers life unto the devil by providing him a constant supply of both semen (concentrated form of blood) and soul energy from the minds, emotions and lusts of those ensnared and enslaved by buying, watching, producing and funding it.

In our communities, it is common practice to bury live humans or human heads with kings, nobles and chiefs when they die. During communal strife and war, human sacrifice is routinely practiced. In some instances, eating of human flesh for ritual purposes is also practiced. So also is the practice of rape and murder of young virgins. Whole communities have been known to be wasted by this practice, usually operating through the working of the twin evils of witchcraft and sorcery.

Eating things Sacrificed to Idols: This is also referred to as “eating the sacrifices of the dead” (Ps. 106:28). This is also a recognized form of Baal worship. It was so common in the time of Paul amongst the Gentiles in the Roman Empire, that the brethren had to seek counsel from the Lord in instructing the brethren to abstain from things sacrificed to idols – Acts 15: 20,29; 1 Cor 10:20.

However, in our own communities, it is still in practice and many believers have partaken of things offered unto idols – sometimes in

monetary forms. May the Lord grant us discernment in this matter. In some communities, the eating of human parts is common. It is a common belief in the occult and Baal worship that eating humans sacrificed to the communal gods, deities and ruling spirits, empowers one particularly during wars and social conflicts. During traditional marriage, the goat that is required of the groom (usually specified in the list from the bride's family) is presented to the ancients of the family (who play the role of priests) before being shared out to family members. This is Baal worship and idolatry.

Ritual Fornication: This is an important aspect of the priesthood of Baal which is basic to human life and behaviours. It operates at several levels. The physical aspect relates to the ancient practice (still practiced currently in some secluded locations/temples/groves) of temple prostitution. Prostitution began in these pagan (Baal) temples and essentially was used to initiate the "innocent" or "simple" and also as a major form of worship unto Baal.

Temple Prostitution: Here, there were temple prostitutes: Whores (females) and sodomites (males: dogs). These were votary priests/priestesses who were consecrated and dedicated to bring worship to Baal through various types of fornication which include the following examples:

Lesbianism: Sexual relationship between two females.

Homosexuality: Sexual relationship between two males.

Heterosexual relationship: Mating of a man with a woman.

Bestiality: Mating of a man or woman with an animal e.g. snakes, dogs etc.

Bisexuality: An individual who mates with both a man, woman or even a beast.

Temple orgies: The ritual mating of part or the whole congregation of Baal worshippers together in which there is indiscriminate, wild and weird sexual relationships amongst the worshippers, under the supervision of these votary temple prostitutes.

Abnormal Sexual Relationships: Sexual relationship involving the mouth and anal orifices: oral and anal sexual practices.

Incest: Sexual relationship between close relatives: father and daughter, mother and son, father and son, mother and daughter, between brothers, between sisters, between brother and sister, and amongst close cousins. Also between uncles and nephews, nieces and vice versa with aunties and etc.

Paedophilia: The mating of adults with children.

Fertility dances: Unclean, immoral, licentious dances similar to the makossa dance. It is instructive that the dance forms of our culture (the various ethnic groups) are essentially based on rhythmic, provocative pelvic movements or snake dance. The obscene makossa dance – particularly the Ndolombolo fertility dance of the Congo people and their music, is a very classic example, of this “snake or serpent” dance.

These things are ritualistic, life giving to the devil (giving life unto the image of the beast: carnality) and a bondage to those involved. It is quite widespread and common, even till date. However, in our time, it has become quite sophisticated and has been made by the devil to be the bedrock of fashion, entertainment (television, home video and by screen motion picture entertainment), computer (internet), music and even sports. Sex is the god that is worshipped by all humanity, both married and unmarried. This is idolatry. The fastest selling products are those that are associated with pornographic based adverts and commercials.

Thus, we find that these unclean practices that occur in these Baal temples are common in our own culture. Incest is a practice that is usually kept as a family secret. Associated with it, is the issue of household based rape involving the house maid and the man of the house, uncles and little nieces and vice versa. Oral and anal sex is taking an upward swing in our modern sexual culture hence such pestilences as HIV/AIDS has now become a worldwide scourge.

The same may be said of the very common sexual acts and affairs that take place in the offices and schools and campuses. There is sexual harassment/intimidation and rape is common. All these relate to the manifestations of ritual fornication in the community which has been extended beyond the ordinary/usual location of the temple to involve the whole community in the setting of homes, offices, schools and in the mind of men.

Prostitution of the Mind: The second aspect of the working of ritual fornication is that which applies to the mind. It has to do with images, projections, conceptions, fantasies, imaginations and visions which the devil has imprinted upon the heart of men. It is the submission of men to these images that has enabled the devil to weave a web and network to link up the hearts and minds of all humanity unto living out a particular lifestyle which is usually a priesthood in that it gives him life thereby making the bondage very strong and the supervising spirits exceedingly strong. This is idolatry of the mind. It is the manipulation, dominion and control of the souls of men (mind, emotion, will and desire) by the devil through the projections that are constantly bombarding the soul (1 Peter 2:9-11). These images upon the soul constitute what the Bible calls **“The image of the beast”** (beast: the carnal nature of man, represented by the number 6 since man was created on the sixth day and 666 speaks of the fullness of the working of carnality in a man’s forehead or mind) and this lifestyle or priesthood is called **“The worshipping of the image of the beast or giving life to the image of the beast”** Rev. 13:1-18; 14: 1-13.

This networking and manipulation has to do with witchcraft and sorcery (Rev. 9:20-21) and this priesthood of men through this inclination of the souls (minds) of men is actually the basis of the emerging one world religion. This religion is Baal worship as manifested through the various aspects of life, the chief of which is sexuality.

Sexuality (ritual fornication) at a sophisticated level is practiced in the mind and one of the major channels of this priesthood is fashion. The modern and current doctrine and script of fashion has been designed in hell and is being played out by agents of Satan (homosexuals, Satanists, new age adherents who have been enriched by the devil for this purpose) who control the fashion world in Paris, New York, Rome and London. The script is simple: expose that which should be covered – nudity is the highest form of art or dressing, according to this doctrine.

This doctrine is being pushed and woven into every fabric and segment of life e.g. commercial products such as car adverts and sports wears. Not to talk of the craze that has befallen the fashion industry – fabrics are designed to hug the body and show off all the curves and bulges: this is ritual fornication par excellence both in the eyes of the beholder and the one (young girls particularly) who is putting on these clothes. The peer pressure is so much that the mind is brainwashed to believe that one is “not on” unless he/she becomes part of this orgy.

This scenario is being duplicated in the home video industry which has been chosen by the devil to fan the embers of ritual fornication in Nigeria. As regards marriage, the reason for marriage is not really to fulfill God’s counsel for marriage but so that this ritual of having fun can be legitimized. Marriage for many has become a trap and a bondage/prison wherein the captives (husband/wife) are manipulated through their minds to worship, adore, honour and service their sexuality as the prime purpose of their coming

together. The driving force of the union becomes sex which must be gratified at all costs – within the home and if not tenable therein, then outside the home beginning from the house maid and even close relatives (incest). This is what the Bible calls “weeping for Tammuz”: the god of sex and fertility – Ezek. 8:14 (Tammuz is another name for Baal or Satan).

For the unmarried, this sexual lust (driven by the spirits of lust, greed, gluttony and violence) is temporarily/momentarily satisfied by masturbation and pornography. Of course the marriage bed has been defiled as these spirits are also attacking the couples hence the marriage institution is presently under siege as at now by the forces of hell and darkness.

The Bible speaks of the loins and breeches in Exod. 28 and 1 Pet. 1:13. The loins/breeches speak of the mind and our sexuality – our ability to bring forth life both in the physical and spiritual realms of life. The devil knows that it is not possible to function as a priest of Christ if one’s loins/breeches are unclean and polluted since the foundation of priesthood is the purity of our loins as shown by the wearing of the “Linen breeches”. Herein then lies the great predicament and pitfall of many who have been forced into this traditional priesthood through unclean loins/breeches, part of which is generational/ancestral. Thus, there are many dear children of God who love the Lord dearly but have the high places of Baal set up in their loins/breeches: emotions, mind, desire and will. Hence, they find that this is a cord the enemy pulls whenever they are about to break forth into liberty. Praise God that the truth and light of God’s word is now shining forth and we know that this entrance of the light into our souls would set us free eternally to serve our Lord and master, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Incense: Burning of incense in the high places unto Baal was common – 1 kings 11:8. It speaks of prayer and supplication unto these idols. The offering of incense is an act of supplication which is meant to appease Baal and to extract favours and blessings from

him. It usually goes along with the offering of other sacrifices. In our own culture, incense burning is also common and is associated with other forms of appeasement such as candle burning, the chanting of certain phrases or prayer lines. Also associated with the burning of incense are such things as fasting for specific periods for judgment on and protection from our perceived enemies, irrespective of our relationship with God.

Burnt Offering: This speaks of an offering that is presented to the devil/Baal, of the totality of the individual or a people. Human sacrifice unto Molech was a form of burnt offering, so also is the issue of habitual/recurrent abortion. This phenomenon of habitual/recurrent abortion speaks of the loss of life to the devil in much the same way as life given to the devil through the manifestation of certain character traits such as hatred/bitterness, anger and sexual uncleanness or sodomy.

Thus, a burnt offering speaks of the total surrender of one's life and heart to Baal much in the same way a besetting sin, which is offered regularly, (e.g. lust, anger, bitterness, worldliness) speaks of the offering of one's oil (within the soul – emotion, desire, mind and) to the devil when we submit to these openings in our souls even against our own will and protestations. We see therefore, that a besetting sin is a stronghold of the devil within our hearts that is supervised by a familial demon unto the purpose of offering one's life/oil in worship unto Baal. It requires strong crying, continuous seeking of the Lord in fasting/prayer to dislodge the devils involved: this kind cometh not out except by prayer and fasting – Mk. 9:29; Heb 5:7-9; Deut 20:19.

The Hebrew word “Alah” or “Olah”^{*} all indicate that it means “a burnt offering or a holocaust: an offering that goes up in smoke”. Thus, the burnt offerings made to Baal, of animals is representative of the life/heart of the one offering the sacrifice. This is surely an

^{*}Alah/Olah: (Hebrew, Strong's concordance number: 5927-30).

open doorway/backdoor through which the devil has gained access in many a Christian's heart ... through the backdoor of anger, bitterness, lust, familial linkages and ties/cords. These familial ties are usually ratified and strengthened through normally "harmless" activities or relationships such as participating in village festivities/feasts/entertainment, TV/video watching, festivals, town unions/village meetings, strong attachment to mother/father/brother/sister etc. It calls for caution and sensitivity in the spirit.

Vessels: The high places of Baal just as did the altar in the Tabernacle of Moses (and all other temples – Solomon, Zerubabel) had vessels of ministry – 2 kings 23:4 and Hosea 2:8. Sometimes the vessels of the house of the Lord were employed in Baal worship particularly when the images of Baal, the groves and the hosts of heaven were brought into the house of the Lord (Holy place and Holy of Holies) as happened in the time of Manasseh, son of the righteous and godly king Hezekiah – 2 kings 21:3-5,7.

Man is the ultimate temple of the Lord – Ps. 132:10-14 and the heart of man is both the altar and throne of God – Rev. 22:1. Thus, since Satan desired to be the Christ and to be the one to reign and overspread, overshadow Zion and eventually inseminate the souls of men (the bride of Christ) as shown in Ezek. 28 and Isaiah 14, he as Baal is still pursuing this purpose of receiving worship and suck from men especially Zion – "The sides of the North". He does this today in a very sophisticated manner. This essentially involves the involvement of our members or vessels in Baal worship as recorded in Romans 6:13, 16:

Verse 13:

" Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin..."

Verse 16:

“ Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.”

Our vessels, members or instruments speak of the four-dimensions of the soul: mind, emotion, will and desires. The word “vessel” is representative of the soul of man as shown by the scripture in Matt. 25:1-13 which states that the wise virgins had their oil also in their vessels (soul) as compared to the foolish virgins who only had their oil (type of the Christ life) within their lamps or spirits (the lamps – the spirit of man is the lamp/candle of the Lord) Prov. 20:27. These aspects of the soul are our members which the devil claims as his possession particularly when we have submitted same through yielding to the desires of our flesh. Thus, in our modern society, the abomination of Manasseh in building altars and setting up Baal worship in the two courts of the house of the Lord (2 kings 21:5) is still taking place, howbeit in the altar of our hearts irrespective of whether we are believers or unbelievers. This is the worship of the image of the beast which leads one to be marked or sealed with the nature of the devil (dragon) for in this worship there is a fellowship with darkness which invariably corrupts and changes the soul nature of those involved in this worship into the image and likeness of the devil which is darkness and unrighteousness. **This is the mark of the beast** the partakers of which will receive the judgment and wrath of God Almighty – Rev. 14:6-11. Let him that hath an ear, hear what the spirit is saying to the churches. The sealing or marking of the beast is a gradual process which is going on now and which if one doesn't turn away from, will eventually cause one to be fully marked with 666 and at this point there is no going back.

Ministers of Baal: There were individuals who had a dedication and consecration upon their lives to serve and minister in the High places of Baal. There were different categories:

- ◆ The priests of Baal - 1 kings 12:31-33; Amos 4:10-13.
- ◆ Prophets of Baal – 1 kings 18:19,25; Jerem. 2:8, 23:13-14; 2 kings 10:19.
- ◆ The worshippers of Baal: 2 kings 10:19,21-28.

2 Kings 10:19

“Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests....”

2 Kings 10:21

“And Jehu sent through all Israel (the church): and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was full from one end to another.” Also in 2 kings 17:16.

The various scriptures above show very clearly that the priesthood of Baal runs parallel to that of Christ. We cannot belong to both (Gal. 5: 16-17). Both are spiritual and not localized in any one geographical location or in temples made with hands. Both take place in the spirit and are wrestling and striving against one another for the control and dominion of the souls of men, which is the spiritual arena of worship. Jesus said in John 4:24:

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

The same can also be said of the Devil even though he uses the weakness of the flesh to seduce men unto his worship, service and dominion.

This is the basis of the one world religion. It is not a physical thing but rather spiritual, involving the soul or minds, emotions, desires and will of men. Right now, there is a revival of wickedness going on in men’s mind which has been greatly bolstered by the information technology revolution through computers. Here, the minds and thoughts of the whole globe are linked together through the information super highway. The object chiefly is the release of

high energy and high wickedness upon the earth. It will take God's mercy for the elect not to be deceived and consumed (Matt. 24), Isaiah says in chapter 5:14-24. that iniquity shall increase (abound) meaning that more and more people would be enlisted to serve Baal as priests, prophets or worshippers.

The spirit of Baal (mammon) is attacking and overwhelming the realm of the church today (Rev. 13) as it did in the days of Jeremiah when the prophets prophesied by Baal and caused the people of God to err in doctrine and judgment (Jerem. 23). In our cultural setting, there are also priests of Baal called by various names in the various localities such as Babalawo, witchdoctor, juju priest etc. The same goes for the prophets of Baal who function as soothsayers, palm readers, fortune tellers, deliverance/prosperity preachers/ministers. There are recognized worshippers of Baal or the sun god in our various traditional environments. These all attest to the common origin of both the Canaanite/Zidonian culture and our own indigenous African culture of Baal worship.

Rooms (chambers) There were also rooms or tents within the high places or attached to it where sacramental/sacrificial prostitution took place –

2 Chron. 21:11

“...he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto (to do the same).”

It housed the whores (temple priestesses and prostitutes) and sodomites (male temple prostitutes). These rooms were also places where other activities of Baal worship took place: eating things sacrificed to idols, sacrifices, incense burning etc. This is confirmed by the scripture in 2Kings 23: 5-8 especially verse 7:

“And he broke down the houses of the Sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove”. These rooms speak of the chambers or rooms in our soul (see Ezek 40 – 44 where a description of Ezekiel's temple is given

which is a type of the chambers of the soul) wherein are areas where darkness/unrighteousness still dwells. It is in these areas that the demons that dwell in our flesh, (Mk 9: 29) reside and hide.

CHAPTER 5

LOVERS OF PLEASURE: ASHTORETH WORSHIP

ASHTORETH (ASHTAROTH)

Ashtoreth is the goddess of the Zidonians (1Kings11: 5, 33). The other form of this word is Ashtaroth. It is also referred to as the abomination of the Zidonians (2Kings23: 13) and worshipped together with Baal (Judges 2:13, 10:6) as their chief idols/gods. Ashtoreth as a deity was typified as the moon or queen of heaven and worshipped in many other cultures but under different names e.g. Cybele and Aphrodite (the word Aphrodisia is a derivative of Aphrodite and means erotic/sexual pleasure). Among the Greeks as Diana (Ephesians), queen of heaven, Artemis, Ishtar/Easter among the Babylonians and mammy water spirit (Africa) and Isis (Egypt). This multiplicity of names is also the same for Baal who is variously called Osiris (Egypt), Adonis , Zoroaster (means seed (Zoro) of Ishtar). He is also called Amadioha and Sango (Nigeria).

Ashtoreth as a word means “she who enriches” or “increases”, it speaks of merchandise and she is regarded as the goddess of love and associated with the sea (Tyre and Zidon were coastal cities), and passion and lust (emotions). In ancient archaeological findings, she is represented as a nude woman beside a lion or a wooden pole (which represents the male phallus or sexual organ). In the mythologies, she is regarded as the wife of El and both the mother and consort of Baal which points to/speaks of her licentious, immoral and unclean nature. She is regarded as the epitome of lust, sexual pleasures and the goddess of the erotic (Eros: carnal, fleshly, physical love) realm. Hence she is worshipped by licentious, wild, unrestricted sexual perversion of the most outrageous proportions. The beauty pageants (e.g. miss world, miss universe) are actually a celebration to her honour much in the same way as prostitution and the act of “making love” or “having casual sex” for the fun of it is also a worship and honour to this spirit. She is the goddess that rules the realms of eros – physical, brute,

beastly, carnal, fleshly sexual intercourse. Pornography and the erotica and unclean behaviours and attitudes are included in this worship.

Thus, as the goddess of love, she is worshipped through sexual pervasion, pleasures (lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God 2Tim 3:4), war, murder and blood shed. The extent of her influence is underlined by the fact that certain geographical towns were named after her.

- ❖ Ashtaroth (the headquarters of Og king of Bashan who dwelt in Ashtaroth Edrei) - Joshua 9:10, Deut. 1:4.

- ❖ Ashtaroth karniam (Ashtaroth of the double horns – a symbol of this spirit). Gen. 14:5.

Among the Canaanites, another important name of Ashtaroth was Astarte which is represented by a wooden pole called Ashera (pillar). The word “Ashera” is taken from the word “Asher” which means: blessed, happy, increase, which speaks of pleasures, joy, happiness and ecstasy. The temple of Ashera or Astarte is the grove, which was located under green trees (Deut. 16:21), hills etc. It had rooms and chambers where the temple prostitutes (females whores) and sodomites (males) partook in fornication with the worshippers. The erecting of groves was associated with Baal altars or were incorporated with the high places (2Kings 23:7) or were isolated. Sometimes, they were also incorporated into the house of the lord:

- ❖ Judges 6:25,28: Gideon destroyed grove near altar of Baal.
- ❖ 1Kings 16:33: Ahab built a grove.
- ❖ 2Kings 23:13-14: Josiah cut down the groves.
- ❖ Judges 3:7: They served Baalim and the groves.
- ❖ 2Kings 23:6: Brought out grove from the house of the lord.
- ❖ 2Chron. 15:16: Made an idol in a grove.

WORSHIP OF ASHTAROTH (ASTARTE)

The worship of Ashtaroah or Astarte took place in the groves (and also in the high places) and was supervised by the priests and prophets of the groves, together with the ministry of the temple prostitutes (whores and sodomites):

- **Prophets of the Groves:** the scripture in 1Kings 18:19, speaks of this class of people in the time of Jezebel, they were four hundred and sustained by Jezebel. These were possessed by the spirit of whoredoms and of the groves. Hosea 4:4-17, 5:4.

- **Temple Prostitutes:** these were the elite class of the ministers of the groves and consisted of two groups: the whores (female prostitutes) and the sodomites or dogs (male prostitutes). In the Old Testament text, the word translated “whore” is “Qedasah”^{*} which means the female temple prostitutes or harlot (a merchant of the body or reproductive/sexual pleasure). The word “Sodomite” or male homosexual is translated from the word “Qadesh”^{*} meaning a consecrated one, a devoted one, a sacred person, a devotee to licentious (immoral sexual) idolatry, a priest of Astarte or Ashtoreth (1Kings 22:46). Thus, both words are derived from the same root word and essentially speak of one who has been dedicated to prostitute to the honour of Astarte/Ashtoreth particularly during her seasons of sexual orgy (increased sexual desire – lust). These seasons were associated with revolt against marriage vows, speaking of a spirit that forbids to marry and that seeks to defile the marital union. This is the spirit of divorce that works in certain families or tribes where the women usually do not keep house, giving heed to matrilineal cords, linkages and ministrations that suggest and dare to insist that their daughter’s/sister’s true place is not in her marital home but rather in her matrilineal home. Thus, even in death, her bones must be returned back home for burial. Thus, we see

^{*} Qedasah: (Hebrew: Strong’s concordance number: 6948)

^{*} Qadesh (Hebrew: Strong’s concordance number: 6945)

that, the marital vow does not seem to affect or extend to this soul tie in this situation. Another aspect of the meaning of the Hebrew word (Qadesh) is that, it speaks of a “Holy one” in the context of Ashtoreth worship. This of course shows the operation of the spirit of DECEPTION, which is an important spirit that overwhelms and covers all those who are involved in Ashtoreth worship or Erotism. No wonder the whole world is bowing at her altar for she has deceived and slain many mighty – Prov. 7:25-27.

These temple prostitutes were specially dedicated to prostitute to the honour of Ashtoreth/Astarte/Aphrodite, who was worshipped through sexual idolatry and perversion.

WHORE

This is the female temple prostitute and is **dedicated to manifest a particular lifestyle and character that is a worship and gives life unto Astarte/Ashtoreth** which is not just an idol but a spirit (1Cor. 10:20). This lifestyle may be manifested in three dimensions such that anyone who partakes in any of these forms, is deemed in the spirit to have yielded to the spirit of Ashtoreth and is regarded by the devil as being involved in whoredom and being ruled by the spirit of whoredoms and of the groves. These three manifestations are:

- ◆ The natural form of whoredom.
- ◆ The spiritual form of whoredom, which involves the mind and the heart (the soul: mind, emotion, desire and will).
- ◆ The effects of whoredom upon the people (family, tribe and nation), particularly as it affects merchandising with the emotions, desires and mind of men in relation to sexual/erotic pleasure:

NATURAL WHOREDOM / RITUAL FORNICATION

This form of worship is common to all forms of idolatry especially Baal and Ashtoreth worship. The core of this worship is based on the fact that these two idols (spirits) are fertility deities and derive

life (which they cannot get directly from God Almighty) from the sexual act when this is not performed within the divine order of God. The divine order of God regarding sex is that it must be shared on the basis of agape love (God's own kind of love) between a man and a woman only within the sanctity of the marital union. In this instance therefore, the marital bed is undefiled.

EROS: CARNAL LOVE

Thus, any other union or sexual activity outside of this narrow and strict platform of marriage, is rebellion. In fact, even within the marriage institution, the sexual union must be shared under the influence of Agape love. Any such acts that are tainted and driven by the lower forms of love e.g. Eros (carnal, fleshly driven and motivated love) are actually within the sphere of Eros: carnal "love making" or "having sex" for the fun of it or to gratify the physical sexual drive of the man. This is an important part of the classical art of ritual fornication.

Ashtoreth as the epitome of lust, and goddess of love and pleasure, was worshipped by lovemaking: both regular (man and woman) and abnormal (e.g. homosexual) forms – Jer.3:1-9. To facilitate this worship then, there were vessels dedicated and consecrated to this purpose and were called temple priestess, maidens, prostitutes and whores. **Their whole lifestyle** – dressing, relationships, character, and mindset and the inward working of their personality **was structured to carry out this priesthood**. These whores were quartered in the chambers / rooms within the high places or in the groves, to which the worshippers (male and female) could resort to in this act of erotic pleasures. The scripture in Proverbs5: 20 says *"And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger."* And again the book of Proverbs chapter 7 in speaking of the whore says in verse 10 *"And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart."* Verse 18 *"Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves."*

Thus, the hallmark of this working of whoredom is uncleanness, lewdness, seduction and defilement. It is not surprising therefore to note that the modern fashion industry is struggling to overreach itself in promoting this “**attire of an harlot**”. The whole purpose of dressing now is to express as much of the curves and rounds of the body as possible, to be as sexually seductive and provocative as possible, to be as weird as possible and to be as rebellious as possible in dressing. These are the cardinal principles of the current craze of “power” dressing, which is nothing short of playing the whore and manifesting the character or “attire of an harlot”.

In that the scripture says in Rev. 17: 6 “*And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints...*” it means that this corruptive influence is taking a toll among the brethren through the nonchalant and simple hearted and presumptuous attitude of believers towards these issues. May the Lord awaken the mighty men that have been slain upon the laps of the strange woman as recorded by Prov.7: 26 “*For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her*”. Let him that hath an ear hear what the spirit of God is saying to the Churches. Amen.

THE BED UNDEFILED

Heb.13: 14 “*Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*”.

The import of the scripture above is that it tells us plainly that the marriage bed is defiled by the spirit of whoredom, which works to produce the attitude and state of the heart and nature of a whoremonger or of an adulterer or adulteress. Thus, we see the twin evil of adultery and whoremongering (uncleanness, lewdness, unclean thoughts, pornography and licentiousness) working in the setting of the family to attack Christian homes. These spirits are usually allied and strengthened by the spirits of violence, greed, lust and gluttony. Hence, they function to

satisfy the belly (the belly is a god or ruler over certain people according to Phil.3) but alas the belly is a bottomless pit that is insatiable.

In situations in which suck is given to these spirits, we find that brethren are under a yoke and bondage of defilement that works to bring either a spiritual or physical barrier between couples. Thus, the two are no longer one and the divine order of God is broken. Their ministry before God and unto the church of God is hindered and if possible, quenched.

The coming together of husband and wife is a deep and intimate aspect of marriage and should and ought to be undefiled even as the spirit of the Lord begins to judge this evil working within the body of Christ.

The scripture in Prov.5: 18 says the “*wife of thy youth*” is a fountain and in verse 15 she is likened to a cistern and a well. Hence, the sexual relationship between the couple becomes an instrument of fellowship (since the man should not be alone – Gen. 2:18) and overcoming in which there is a mutual ministry of intimacy, tenderness, oneness and submissiveness.

In the flesh, it is the deepest reflection of the union of Christ and his body even as the wife submits completely to the husband who embraces, covers and shields her, ministering appreciation, acceptance and love to his spouse ... Songs of Solomon 2: 6 “*His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me*”. Verse 3 “*...I sat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste*”.

The goal of this fellowship is not selfish, it is Christ-centered: seeking to give and bring out the best in the other. Thus, we see that the sexual union between man and woman can only fulfill its purpose in the divine order of marriage where it functions as an instrument of celebrating the spiritual oneness of the couple. The

truth being that marriage is essentially a spiritual reality even as mirrored and highlighted by that between Christ and his body.

PHYSICAL PLEASURE

The physical pleasure of the marital relationship is actually a very elementary and less important aspect of the act of marriage. However it is this aspect of marriage that has been put forth by the devil to be the essential focus of marriage. Thus “lovemaking” or “having sex” is essentially addressing the physical pleasure of the sexual union. Therefore, when men engage in this for the sake and fun of the pleasure, it is not only selfish, they give suck to the spirit of whoredom and Ashtoreth.

We then see that this is the basis of this priesthood of Ashtoreth in which unmarried people and even married people (within or outside the marital relationship) give life unto the devil. This therefore has resulted in the situation in which the minds of men have been sealed and fixed with this nature and attitude of pleasure attainment instead of allowing the sexual union to function for the purpose of fellowship in the fear of God and the beauty of holiness.

The sexual union within the context of righteousness, holiness and fellowship considers the feelings and benefit and inadequacies of the other – which is a godly attribute. This is in contrast to “love making” or “having sex” which is an act of rebellion (when it occurs outside of marriage or even within the marital union) of the flesh under the inspiration of pornography, lust and uncleanness.

Therefore, “love making” is a ministry unto Ashtoreth and is a product of a fixed mind and attitude of having fun and pleasure, which is the same thing as the “Weeping for Tammuz”, mentioned in Ezek.8: 13 wherein the women as part of the worship of this god of fertility, were required to wail and supplicate for the visitation of Tammuz from the regions of darkness and the dead, unto the

earth during the season of dryness, in order for the earth to be fruitful and to be able to bring forth a bountiful harvest.

It is therefore clear that the practices associated with fertility rites: celebration of an individual coming up to manhood or womanhood such as the “*mgbede*” rites in Rivers State of Nigeria, are examples of mammy water or Ashtoreth worship in our culture. The form, context, practice and manifestation of these maiden festivities may vary and differ, but the foundational principles remain unshaken in being deeply rooted in Ashtoreth and Baal worship, which thing is idolatry and rebellion against the true worship of the Almighty God in the hearts of men.

THE SPIRIT OF WHOREDOM

In examining the workings of this spirit, the following scripture in Hosea 4:12 is very important “...*for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God*”. The word “whoredoms” is taken from the Hebrew word “zanna”^a, this word is derivative of “zanah”^b which means: to fornicate, commit fornication, be a harlot, commit adultery, to seduce, have intercourse with idols or false gods and spirits, to apostatize or turn from the truth, it also means rebellion.

Based on the foregoing, it essentially means:

- ❖ To commit fornication with woman.
- ❖ To have intercourse with idols/false gods (Idolatry).
- ❖ Rebellion
- ❖ To turn away from the truth (apostasy/rebellion)

Thus, we can see that the spiritual form of whoredom, which takes place within the inward parts or heart, and soul of an individual goes hand in hand with natural whoredoms. This is very evident in

a: Zanna: (Hebrew, Strong’s concordance number: 2183)

b: Zanah: (Hebrew, Strong’s concordance number: 2181)

the scriptures and in our daily interactions with other people. The scriptures show clearly, that wherever there is a working of physical whoredom, that the basis of it is actually spiritual whoredom where the spirit of whoredom motivates the people not only to engage in illicit sexual intercourse but also to give over their minds and inward parts to worship, serve and honour Baal and Ashtoreth. Ultimately, this amounts to the worship of the dragon or devil/Antichrist. We shall bring this out by examining in some detail the following scriptures:

Hosea 4:13-19

V13: *“They sacrifice upon the top of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery”.*

V14 *“I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall”.*

The above scripture shows clearly the link between idolatry (spiritual fornication) and natural fornication. In this instance, the “daughters” and “spouses” are involved in idolatry “sacrificing upon the top of the mountains and burning incense upon the hills”. Then we also see the association of natural fornication with this setup of idolatry: *“for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots...”* *“therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery”.*

We then see that whoredom is a platform or an altar, which is like a spectrum – at one end, is natural whoredom while the other extreme has to do with spiritual whoredom. The motivating factor in this matter of whoredom is the spirit of whoredom that is referred to in Hosea 4:12: *“For the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err (to go into idolatry, rebellion and apostasy)...”*

In this regard, Hosea 4:11 addresses the issue of the heart: “*Whoredom and wine and new wine do take away the heart*”.

The conclusion that we can draw from the above scriptures is that the effect of the spirit of whoredoms is essentially upon the heart and the inward parts or soul of an individual. It is this spirit that motivates, quickens, drives and propels a person’s soul to err and to give heed to seducing spirits and to worship, honour, submit and serve idols, false gods, devils, demons and the devil himself.

Proverbs 7:5-27

This scripture shows us that the spirit of whoredom is related to the state of the heart. Several places in this passage speak of the peace offering:

V13 “*So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him,*

V14 “*I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows*”.

The peace offering (Lev. 3:1-17) has to do with the offering of the inward parts (soul and heart) unto God as the ultimate act of worship (unto God) during fellowship and communion with God. Here, the scripture tells us that whore/prostitutes also have “peace offering” to offer, they have vows to pay. Obviously, these are offerings and sacrifices unto the devil - 1Cor.10:20. Thus, the act of whoredom of playing the harlot does not just stop at the physical issue of sexual intercourse. It does certainly go beyond this, to mean an interaction of one’s soul in which one’s heart is also being offered unto the devil. Herein lies the deadliness of sexual uncleanness spoken of in 1Cor. 6:12-20 as a sin against God and one’s own body. It says: “He that is joined unto a harlot is one body”, the essential point being that the whore is a dedicated one or vessel unto the devil.

The Hebrew word translated peace offering is “Shellem” from which the word “Shalom” is obtained. It means peace. This is a

sacrifice of thanksgiving and is given wholeheartedly and voluntarily. Thus, to give peace offering to the devil through whoredom is to voluntarily give one's soul unto the devil as a whole hearted and perfect offering. The peace offering essentially involves the bringing of the fat that is found around the inwards: liver, kidney etc. The fat represents the real essence and being of one's personality. It speaks of the offering of one's soul. This is confirmed by the following scripture in Proverbs 7:21-23:

V21 *"With her much fair speech, she causes him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.*

V22 *He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks.*

V23 *Till a dart strike through his liver, as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth noth that it is for his life."*

PEACE OFFERINGS

Thus, the spirit of whoredoms functions to cause men to bring peace offerings unto the devil. This voluntary, wholehearted offering of the fat of one's soul speaks of the "besetting sins" in the lives of believers – Heb. 12:1-3. This is an altar where an idol is appeased on a continual basis. Peace offerings and vows are payed to this spirit according to 1Cor. 10:20.

An idol is nothing but for the spirit behind it. It is the spirit that receives the worship and further binds the worshipper. Thus a besetting sin involves an idol, a spirit behind this idolatry (which receives the worship) and as we shall see shortly, a host of associated spirits (Mt. 12:43-45: when a spirit comes to a garnished place, it brings seven more wicked spirits to lodge with it), which involves gluttony, violence, greed, rebellion etc.

BESETTING SIN/BURNT OFFERING

Another aspect of the working of the spirit of whoredoms to produce the disease of the soul called "besetting sin" is shown by the burnt offering or the "Olah" or "Alah" offering*.

*Olah or Alah: (Hebrew – Strong's concordance number: 5928 or 5930).

This is a holocaust offering, a sacrifice, which goes up in smoke, a sacrifice that is entirely burned. It is usually burnt all through the night (Lev 6:8-13). This is also shown in the following scriptures:

Proverbs 7:9 *“In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night”*.

V18 *“Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves”*.

This offering of oneself to whoredom takes place in the time of darkness (midnight) – wickedness, ungodliness and unrighteousness. In fact at midnight, when the wickedness of man or the world will come to the full, there would be men who would have sold themselves totally unto the devil – as an “Olah” of burnt offering, thus enabling and qualifying them to be marked with the seal of the beast: 666. Thus, the burnt offering in the context of besetting sin e.g. lust, (anger, bitterness, unforgiveness etc.) has to also do with the total surrender of one’s heart (and life) to Ashtoreth/Baal worship. The scripture in 2 Timothy 2:26 speaks of those who are taken captive at will of the devil. Thus, this besetting sin renders the individual a slave to the habit of lust.

CREATURE OF LUST

The ministry of the whore/prostitute is to minister lust and pleasures to the worshippers of Ashtoreth. **Therefore, a whore is a creature of lust and pleasures.** Thus, one with a besetting sin of lust is a whore: one who lives for the purpose of “making love”. One whose greatest pleasure in life is sexual pleasure. This is idolatry. This is produced by the spirit of whoredoms. Thus, those who are overtaken and bound by the spirit of whoredoms are subject to the besetting sin of lust and are candidates to be sealed with the nature of lust. Ultimately unless there is an urgent repentance and deliverance, this individual is at risk of being marked with the nature of whoredom: a creature of darkness that manifests the nature of lust and whoredom. This nature of lust and whoredom has to do with the mindset and an attitude of heart that

is fixed and fashioned to always submit or give life to Ashtoreth: the goddess of loves/pleasures.

PLEASURE

Another important aspect of this burnt/peace offering of the spirit of whoredom has to do with the pleasure of entertainment. Under this category comes music, movies, sports, television, cable network, video CD and VCD, computer/computer games, the internet etc. This has to do with the worship of pleasure, which is essentially Ashtoreth worship, being that she is worshipped by pleasures. Worship of pleasure sets in when “we are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God” – 2Tim. 3:4.

In this instance, pleasure, comfort, entertainment and sleep become an idol to us. This is a very subtle but mighty weapon the enemy is presently using to ensnare many believers, not to talk of the whole world.

The scripture says, “*bodily exercise profiteth little but godliness profits unto all things.*” There is clearly a spirit behind all the global festivals. Not only are they dedicated to specific idols (e.g. ‘Nike’ is the Greek god/idol of victory), they are also dedicated to ancient Greek gods and spirits. They are always associated with violence, accidents and death not to mention the amount of emotions and mental energy expended in the course of being part of the “big party” or “big event”. The last “world cup fever” was associated with the loss of several lives. The Olympic games particularly the opening and closing ceremonies are associated with the lighting of a torch and the ministry of certain temple maidens. The lighting of the torch has an origin in the worship of the sun god – the torch was lighted by the sun (fire) as a sign of the reverence of the ancients to the sun – as the source of life, power and energy. The maidens/virgins that minister in these games have an origin in the temple maiden/virgins of the Ashtoreth/Baal temple of Athens, Greece. These all speak of the idolatrous origins of these games and the spirits they minister to us when we open

our souls unto their ministrations, these include – pride, envy, vanity, ecstasy etc.

WHOREDOM AND ENTERTAINMENT

The working of this whoredom is such that as one entertainment/sporting event is coming to an end, another one begins. Thus, the worshipper of pleasure is continually being fed and bound by these very wicked spirits. May the Lord open the eyes of His people to see the vanity of these things – Eccl.1: 1-3. May He judge our hearts that the shackles of this besetting sin might be broken in our lives. Oh father grant that we might be completely delivered from the spirit of whoredoms that deceive our hearts and cause us to err in judgment. Amen and Amen. Today the entertainment industry is a mega billion-dollar business. The danger and power of this deception is that entertainment in itself is “harmless” and looks presentable and attractive.

The western world has created an idol/god out of pleasure, and its participants - the sports/entertainment personalities are stars – movie stars, music stars, sport stars etc. In the spirit, most of the powerful entertainment stars have crossed the boundary of innocence and are now dedicated vessels unto Ashtaroth. They wield a corruptive influence over the youths and they function (to an extent) as whores – bringing and ministering pleasure and ecstasy unto the worshippers of pleasure in a manner that is not godly and righteous. They evoke an aura and spell through their ministrations.

The fashion industry stars essentially promote “the attire of an harlot”, while the music stars e.g. the Makossa music stars/dancers function to stir up lust and lewdness in the people particularly the youth. The purpose is to engage the minds, emotions and desires of the people in a spiritual orgy that is actually a worship which is reminiscent (similar) to the frenzy and wild orgies of ritual fornication that involves all the worshippers in the ancient temples of Ashtaroth, with the help of the temple whores/sodomites.

In the context of the entertainment industry, some of these stars are actually functioning as “temple whores” – a priesthood of pleasure, that enables and encourages the people to engage in pleasures: an act of worship to Ashtaroth, under the influence and motivation of the spirit of whoredom. Furthermore, these stars are held up by the spirit of whoredoms as role models or cult idols and heroes. In actual fact, what is happening in the spirit is that the images and impressions of the life style of these “whores” are projected unto the altars or “screens” of the minds of the people by the spirit of whoredoms such that the worshippers of pleasures begin to pattern their own actions e.g. dressing after these images in their heart and mind. This is not only witchcraft and idolatry but borders on the worship of the **image of the beast** (Rev.14: 9-12)

ROCK MUSIC CULTURE

In this regard, rock music, its stars and fans, give us a very good example of this worship of pleasure through the entertainment industry. Rock music has grown to become “a rock music culture” which has as its root and core the following vices:

- Occultism and devil worship
- Animal sacrifices (blood sacrifice)
- Pornography, fornication and adultery
- Drugs
- Violence
- The “hippie movement” – vagabond spirit manifestation.

All the above now take place on stage during their concerts. MTV, channel O and other such TV channels have popularized and commonized these lewd practices such that they have become “acceptable” to the undiscerning public. Thus, it is clear that this is Ashtaroth worship but in a “modernized” or “civilized” setting. The same culture has been transferred to the homes and hearts and minds of the people through the mass media e.g. TV, Internet. It has also been transferred to the other arms of the entertainment industry such that bits and pieces of these vices are now

incorporated into movie scenes, sports festivals, (football championships, tennis tournaments) computer games etc. e.g. during the world cup, the pornographic dressing of the Brazilian girls was a major and constant interest of the photojournalists.

This “rock music culture” has now been exported to the third/developing world by the powerful western market (merchants of the earth – Rev 18) such that most young stars now think, live, behave and dress like these stars or “whores”, no matter how outlandish the behaviour may be. e.g. most young men (including yuppies: young, upward mobile people) now wear earrings especially on the left ear, because most stars/fans now do so etc. The “trouser wearing culture” is now catching on and spreading among our young girls such that anyone that does not own a tight body hugging trouser/long skirt or mini skirt accompanied by a “spagetti” tight body hugging blouse especially the type that reveals their navel, believe that they are not “chic” or part of the happening around. This is Ashtaroth worship and the spirit of whoredom at work. The point is that this is fast gaining ground within the heart and mind and lifestyle of young people in the church. This is the reason why the lord is rebuking this tendency for a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. We are to flee from all appearance of evil. Amen.

In conclusion, modern day entertainment industry began in the Roman theatres under the emperors wherein the gladiators killed and maimed one another as a form of sport. Nero even burned Rome for fun. Therefore the entertainment industry was created under the motivation and influence of the spirit of whoredom as a means or an altar upon which many would come to worship. It was mingled with that which is legitimate, harmless and beneficial (stress therapy, employment, career, information, news, education etc.). Thus, the positive effect of entertainment is used as a smoke screen to hide the real intension: a platform/priesthood to seduce men to seek, worship and serve pleasures and Ashtaroth.

Proverbs 23: 27:

This scripture states that:

“For a whore is a deep ditch, and a strange woman is a narrow pit.”

WHOREDOM AND THE BELLY

This scripture is essentially speaking of a principle regarding the whore: the fact that the urge to have pleasure or play the harlot is insatiable. It is like a deep ditch, like the belly – a hollowness and bottomless pit, which can never be filled. It is much like hell which is also a bottomless pit (Rev. 11:7; Isa. 5:14; Heb 2:4-5).

The spirit of whoredom thus operates through the desire of man, which is a component part of the soul nature of man (Ezek.1, Rev.4). Here, the desire was represented by the face (nature) of a man, meaning that one of the beast-like natures of man is desire (the others being: (a) mind – represented by the eagle (b) emotions – represented by the lion and (c) will – represented by the ox/calf. What we see therefore is that whoredom is a working which has the ability of bringing pleasure and satisfaction to the soul, however this is only temporary and short-lived. Thus, the worshipper of pleasure is in bondage to it (Roman 6:16). He yields his members (desire and soul) to the spirit of whoredoms which influences his desire and lust. He gets pleasure in the process, while the devil and Ashtaroth get the worship and life/suck from him. However, he is bound to go back to have more of the pleasure by yielding himself/herself more and more, deeper and deeper to these lust/besetting sins/pleasures/entertainment. Thus, he becomes involved in a vicious cycle that goes on and on. May the Lord deliver his people from the bondage of this death.

It is like the belly that rules over some people. Phil. 3:17-21 speaks of those whose god (ruler) is the belly or their desire. This is carnality. We then see that whoredom uses lust working through the beast-like nature of desire to bind those who submit and worship pleasure. The urge or desire for pleasure is never refused

but yielded to and satisfied even in disobedience and preference over and above God. The spirit of whoredom when it manifests as a deep ditch or the belly speaks of the merchandizing with the souls of men in which this speaks of the enriching (Ashtaroth means “she who enriches”) of the souls of men with delicacies of lust, pornography, whoredom etc. Thus, these worshippers are called “merchants” of the earth in Rev. 18 since they give worship and suck to this spirit and buy in return pleasures, treasures of darkness and positions in the kingdom of this world as kings and merchants of the earth (Rev. 18, Matt. 4:4). However, the desire like the belly never is filled up or satisfied because it is only God that is able to fulfill, fill and satisfy our longing soul for he is the only one that “fillet all things in all” (Eph 1:23). He is the great deep that is able to fill the craving and desire of our soul (Ps 42).

We need to hunger and thirst after the living God. We need to snap out of this stupor of seeking for pleasures, for that is what the devil wants us to be: creatures of desire for pleasures howbeit this pleasures cannot provide a lasting fulfillment for our souls. It is also so shallow and temporary - for the things that are seen, felt, (physical, worldly) are temporary while the things that are not seen (spiritual) are permanent and real. 2 Cor 4:16-18.

Hence the joy of his presence and the ever gloriously abundant pleasure of his right hand are available unto us (Ps 16:11)... Oh what joy unspeakable and full of glory awaits those who would break through this veil of carnality into the glorious blaze of his presence...eye hath not seen nor ears heard what things the Lord hath prepared for us. (1cor 2:9)

THE COVERING OF WHOREDOM

Lev. 29:19

“Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore, lest the land fall to whoredom and the land become full of uncleanness”.

The last manifestation of the spirit of whoredom that we shall examine has to do with the ability and tendency of this working to cast a covering over the people of the land. Spirits essentially work to cast a spell or covering. This can be confirmed by the scripture in Ezek.28: 14: *“Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so”*. Again, in verse 16 *“...therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire”*.

Thus, we see that this working of the spirit of whoredom is able to bring a covering over a person, a people and the land. Thus, the lifestyle and culture of a people to prostitute themselves and play the harlot and be whoremongers is actually as a result of a spiritual covering. Hence, all who are born or who come under that covering by marriage, relationship etc, also begin to manifest this nature of whoredoms. In this regard, we note that Ashtoreth worshippers have a greater tendency to play the harlot and to prostitute themselves with idols (physical and spiritual) and false gods and by so doing they work iniquity and cause it to spread in the land. An example of this covering is shown by the advertisement industry, where the spirit of whoredom is running riot, spreading wickedness and poisoning the minds of the undiscerning. Here, sexuality, pornography, uncleanness, lewdness is subtly fed to the consumers and intermingled with the product being advertised. It does not matter if the product is a comb (that has the picture of a naked woman) or a car (that is sold to the viewers with skimpily clad or dressed “whore” in the form of models). The real purpose is to defile the soul and bring wickedness upon the land. In the television, cable and network industry, it is the adverts that are used to sustain the pornography industry. The more weird and outlandish and unclean the material is, the more costly the advert slots.

SELLING FLESH AND THE WINE OF HER FORNICATION

Thus, we see a merchandising spirit here that is selling “flesh” to the souls of men under the cover of the innocence or necessity of

the products being advertised. A scripture, which confirms this working, is found in Rev. 17

V1 “...*come hither, I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:*

V2 *with whom the kings of the earth have committeth fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.*”

The scripture then goes on to explain what the term “that sitteth upon many waters” means in verse 15: “*And he said unto me, the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*”.

Here, the scripture is saying that this spirit of the great whore is casting a covering and sitting over the peoples of the world – all peoples, all nations, all tribes and tongues. Thus, this spirit of whoredom is a very, very strong spirit that has been working and shaping the culture and traditions and lifestyle of the people of the world. This culture and lifestyle is that of the wickedness of fornication and whoredom for “*she hath made the nations drunk with the wine of the wrath of her fornications...therefore are the nations mad*” Rev.17:2, Rev.18:3, Jer.51:7, therefore the nations have erred and rebelled against God.

The scripture tells us that this spirit has a ministry – “*she hath been a golden cup in the hand of the Lord*” Jer.51:7 and in Rev.17:4 “*having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication*”. Verse 5 goes on to say “*And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth*”. It is clear where the abominations, unclean lifestyle and harlotry that we see in our land, is coming from. And the scripture is also clear about the effect and focus of this ministry as seen in verse 6: “*And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus*”. The people of God are being overcome by

this spirit because of lack of knowledge, lack of discernment and being simple of heart.

Thus, we see then that the spirit of whoredom or of the great whore as manifested in the worship of Ashtaroth, is not just a mere spirit but a prince, a ruler, a high wickedness that overshadows and covers the whole realm of eros (erotic pleasures and comforts). This spirit is charged with the responsibility of bringing forth life (through the working or channel of sexuality) into the realm or kingdom of darkness. It is necessary to add that his prime target is the church of the Living God. This life is in the sexual fluids given forth in sexual relationships for they are concentrated forms of blood; for the life of the flesh is in the blood, says the scripture in Lev. 17:11. Thus, sexual uncleanness is one big source of life for the kingdom of darkness. Note that they cannot get the life from God directly, hence they suck it from men through sin and deception.

SODOMITES

The sodomites, like the whore, were priests of Ashtaroth and were dedicated unto this spirit for the purpose of enabling the worshippers of Ashtaroth (both men and women) to have erotic pleasures, ecstasy and to fill themselves with “loves”. The following scriptures throw more light about their nature and activities:

Deut.23: 17-18:

V17 *“There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel”*.

V18 *“Thou shall not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow: for even both these, are abomination unto the Lord thy God”*. (The term “dog” here is a prophetic/symbolic name for sodomites).

1Kings14: 23-24: (During the reign of King Rehoboam.)

V23 *“For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree.*

V24 *“And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel.”*

The scripture above tells us clearly that God’s counsel to the children of Israel was that no sodomites were to be allowed in the land. However, in the time of Rehoboam, the son of Solomom, he rebelled against God and built high places and groves where Baal and Ashtaroth were worshipped and wherein were quartered the temple prostitutes (whores and sodomites). 2Kings 23:7 *“And he broke down the houses of the sodomites that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove”.*

1Kings15: 11-12:

V11 *“And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father”*

V12 *“And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his father had made”.*

Here we see king Asa doing the will of God by breaking down the high places and removing the sodomites out of the land. Thus, it is God’s expectation that every child of God and the church should not allow high places and sodomites (the spirit of whoredom) to reign in our hearts and lives for sin shall not have dominion in our lives (Rom.6).

1Kings22: 43,46: (During King Jehoshaphat’s reign)

V34 *“And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father, he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places.”*

V46 *“And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land.”*

These scriptures confirm to us that the sodomites ministered in the high places and aided the people in their offering to Baal/Ashtaroth.

2Kings23: 7:

“And he (Josiah) broke down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the grove”.

This scripture here gives a further insight into the operation of the sodomites. Mannasseh, the grand father of Josiah, was the one who built altars and groves in the house of the Lord, thus making a way for the sodomites to dwell in their own houses by the house of the Lord, together with the women (or whores) who wove hangings/veils for the groves where they committed whoredom and lewdness. Thus, in the above scripture, we see Josiah moving by the counsel of the Lord and by the anointing of the prophetic word spoken about him by “the prophet from Judah” (1Kings13: 2) to break down their idolatrous houses, thus fulfilling the word of God.

SODOM: GOING AFTER STRANGE FLESH

The act of homosexuality as carried out by these male prostitutes is an abomination in the sight of God Almighty. It is so grievous that the homosexual is called “a dog”. The interesting point here is that this wicked sexual behaviour is also called “sodomy” and these worshippers of Baal/Ashtaroth are subsequently called “sodomites”. Thus, the scripture indicates that the city of Sodom (and the neighbouring towns of Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim) was populated by them who were described as being wicked, filthy and unlawful. This scripture is found in 2 Peter chapter 2: 6-8:

V6 *“And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly.”*

V7 *“And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:*

V8 (“*For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.*”)

The men of Sodom practiced homosexuality and the scripture uses five words above to depict the depth of this rebellious nature:

- **Condemned:** God judged this nature.
- **Ungodly:** this behaviour is of the devil.
- **Filthy:** unclean spirits and demons feed (get life/suck) from this behaviour or lifestyle hence they overshadow, manipulate and influence men to walk in this ungodly way.
- **Wicked:** even though pleasure, ecstasy and sexual satisfaction is obtained by the men, beneath all these facade or veil lies the wickedness of the heart of men. God is not mocked.
- **Unlawful:** this lifestyle is one of recklessness. In fact, the Greek word translated unlawful is “Anomos”, meaning “without law, unholy, reckless and disorder”. Thus, these people did not acknowledge God’s order and law regarding sexuality. They were perverse and rebellious to the most extreme proportions.

There is another scripture that highlights the ungodliness of this city:

Jude7 “*Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange (other) flesh are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire”.*

Here, we see that the men of these cities (including the neighbouring towns of Tyre and Zidon) were ruled over by fornication or the spirit of whoredoms and “pornoia” – pornography and all forms of uncleanness/sexual perversion. This include “going after strange flesh”, which means homosexuality (sodomy) and lesbianism. In other words, Ashtaroth and Baal were the chief idols of these cities. Thus, the reason for their wickedness and filthiness was nothing else but the worship of Baal/Ashtaroth.

The judgment and vengeance which God visited upon them is probably one of the most severe in the history of men and the chief reason for this was Baal/Ashtaroth worship/idolatry as shown by the working of sodomy and whoredom. The culture, traditions and lifestyle of Sodom and her sister cities were governed and motivated by the spirit of whoredom, pornoia and fornication.

Thus, the city of Sodom was one that was populated almost exclusively by whoremongers, fornicators and unclean persons. This is brought out by the fact that Abraham could not present unto God up to 10 righteous men in the whole cosmopolitan towns of Sodom and Gomorrah. Gen.18v32 - *“And he said, oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten’s sake”*.

Sodom/Gomorrah were not poor and wretched cities. They were prosperous and well renowned. This is shown in Ezek.16: 49: *“Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy”*.

Sodom could pass for any of the modern “happening” cities of the world such as New York, Paris, London, and etc. This much is confirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ himself who compared Sodom with the major cities of Israel in his days ... Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum etc. (Lk.10: 12-16). It is well known that what characterized the city of Sodom is the same that underlines the culture of the modern cities of our time: pride, fullness of bread, idleness, pornography and sexual perversion and neglect of the poor and needy.

This global tendency of Sodom is brought out by the scripture in Rev.11: 8 which describes the worldly systems of man as the spiritual Sodom and Egypt where also our Lord was crucified. Thus, the spirits that ruled Sodom in the natural are still the same

that rule the spiritual Sodom. Ashtaroth as depicted by the great whore of Rev.17 and 18 is she that sitteth upon the waters or peoples of the world ... in every tribe, tongue, nation; culture and clime, ...she is the spirit of whoredom that is causing and deceiving all to drink and partake of the delicacies of her whoredoms/fornications.

Thus, this spirit is presently casting a covering or spell over the whole realm of the worldly systems of man: eros, carnality, the flesh, sin, and worldliness etc. She is in charge even though her judgment has begun in the heart and lives of them that are crying out to God NOW for deliverance and mercy. She is the mother of harlots (whoremongers, sodomites, prostitutes) and of all abominations (lewdness, wickedness, filthiness, lawlessness) of the earth. May the Lord have mercy upon his dear ones at this time. Amen.

In this spiritual city, there are essentially two workings through which these evils of Baal/Ashtaroth worship work to cast a covering and overshadow and control the souls of men (for either one is being overshadowed by the Almighty God as shown in Psalm 91v1 or one is being overtaken by darkness). These two principles are those of:

Whoredom represented by Sodom
Sorcery (idolatry) represented by Egypt

Hence sorcery and whoredoms are the bedrock of the idolatry/Baal/Ashtaroth worship as has been previously shown and these are the major principles driving the modern culture of man: **secular humanism**. Here man is encouraged to be as sexually perverse as possible, from dressing (fashion) to sports where pornography is the order of the day. Also men are being encourage to contact “spirit guides” and to “channel” these spirits so that they might receive wisdom from them.

Thus, we can safely conclude that the culture of the world, worldliness and the ways of the world are deeply rooted in Sodom (whoredom) and Egypt (sorcery). To touch the world, is to be defiled by these twin evils ... we are to have the garment “unspotted” by the flesh and the world. May the Lord help his people at this hour. Amen.

CHAPTER 6

COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM

Perhaps, the best example yet of how God intends for his people to relate to the current rebellion that is coming forth out of the midst of man's idolatrous culture (beginning from the crude, primitive forms of culture exhibited in the villages and cities of the under-developed third world communities such as Nigeria, to the hi-tech, computer age sophistry of the developed cities of New York, Paris, London), is shown by the life of Abraham.

ABRAHAM

The background of the family and country of Abraham is given in the following scriptures:

Joshua24: 2:

“And Joshua said unto all the people, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old times, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; and they served other gods”.

Genesis11: 28,31:

V28 *“And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees”.*

V31 *“And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter –in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there”.*

It is evident from the above scriptures that prior to the call of Abraham, he (together with his father and brethren) were idol worshippers in the land of his nativity – Ur of the Chaldees. Therefore, the background of Abraham was that of idolatry and the culture of the people of Ur of the Chaldees which was essentially that of magic, soothsaying, Baal/Nimrod worship together with the veneration of Ishtar (Ashtaroth) as the Queen of Heaven or the

worship of the moon (Hosts of Heaven) (Dan.2: 2, 10; 1:2). In Genesis 11, the scripture records the judgment of the kingdom of Nimrod at Babel. This Babel was in the same region of Ur of the Chaldees, hence the idolatry of Ur of the Chaldees derived its objects of worship (worship of marduk or Bel or merodach as the sun god and that of Ashtaroah or Sin as the moon god) from Babel.

Thus, the call of God unto Abraham was to “come out of her”, to separate himself from this idolatrous pagan culture, unto the worship of Jehovah, the Almighty and true God, the possessor of Heaven and the Earth. Canaan, therefore represented the land of promise of which he could only inherit, if he would heed the call to separate himself from his family, kindred and nation (Gen.12: 1-3). The foundation of Abraham’s family lineage, his kindred and nation of Chaldee were all under the covering of Bel or Baal, who was/is the ruling spirit over his people. His foundation and generation was therefore dark and unclean. God’s call for separation therefore had to be total and complete. He had to put off this way of life (which he had been used to) for another one which he was beginning to perceive in his heart. The Christian calling is a different way of life or culture from the one we have been used to. The two cannot be mixed together. “Touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, saith the Lord God Almighty.”

The call of Abraham to go out of Ur of the Chaldees, the land of his birth represents the same calling of all believers for we also are the seed of Abraham, by faith. In this call, there are three dimensions, which conform or tally with the three dimensions of the tabernacle of Moses (outer court, Holy place and Holiest of all) or the three feasts of the Lord (Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles). These three dimensions are represented by Haran (Outer court or wilderness experience) while Canaan represents both the Holy place and Holiest of all experience. The full dimension of this call was that of possessing Canaan as his inheritance. He looked for a city whose builder and maker was God, a city that had foundations in the Holy Mountains of Zion. In

the spirit, his ultimate possession was to be his own soul for the salvation of our souls is the end (ultimate or Canaan) of our faith – 1 Peter 1:10.

However, Canaan was presently under occupation by some ungodly and idolatrous people – the six nations of: the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites – Joshua 12:8; Exod 23:23. He had to overcome these people before he could come into his inheritance/possession. The people of Canaan had a familiar culture to that of his nativity, Ur of the Chaldees, seeing that they are all part of the cultures which originated from the Babel of Nimrod. To overcome them he had to first, overcome the culture of his own nativity by severing all soul ties with his family, kindred and nation. The Canaanites exemplified by the Zidonians, Amorites, Moabites and Ammonites worshipped Baal and Ashtaroth which are similar to the idolatrous worship of the Babylonians and people of Ur of the Chaldees represented by the worship of Bel/Marduk (sun god) and the moon god (Sin) and a host of other idols including Molech and Chemosh.

In the spirit, the soul realm of man which is our own Canaan is inhabited by the beastly nature, Satan, principalities and powers, demons and familiar spirits, which we have to overthrow and cast out of our heavens in order for us also to enter into our possession (Rev. 12:2-12). But we must first of all, come out from the culture of the land of our nativity – Nigeria, Africa etc. We must denounce, reject, hate, abhor and repent from the defilement and contamination that we have received unto our souls by bowing down to serve the gods, traditions and customs of the land of our nativity...just as did faithful Abraham.

It is only when we have done this that we would have the crown (or throne right) of righteousness which would enable us to overcome in the realm of the heavens of our soul, just as was the experience of Abraham. This principle is brought forth in the scripture in James 1:12

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

And also in II. Corinthians 10:6

“And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience when our obedience is fulfilled.”

We see then that the major milestones in the pilgrimage of Abraham are as follows:

UR OF THE CHALDEES: This represents the World or Egypt. This was his nativity from where God called him to sever the soul ties with his nativity/flesh, personality, culture, traditions and idols. This corresponds to our culture, personality, nativity or flesh from which God is presently calling and urging his people to come out. In Egypt, God judged the gods of Egypt under Moses, just as He judged the gods of Babylon under Abraham and He intends to judge the gods of our nativity in our generation.

HARAN: When Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, he journeyed to Canaan but he made a stop over at Haran. Although Haran speaks of that which is mountainous and an uplifting experience in God, it corresponds to the outer court experience. It was the first realm of Abraham walking in faith with God. Hence, it was not God’s will for Abraham to tarry here for a long time. The death of his father in Haran was perhaps God’s prompting for him to move on for it may have become easy for him to settle down here, seeing that he had been blessed by God in Haran as shown by Gen. 12:5.

“And Abraham took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran, and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.”

Bless God that Abram yielded to God's prompting to move on. The church has been blessed in coming out of Egypt or the Ur of the Chaldees but we need to come into Canaan land: the ultimate of God, which is to possess our souls. We need to arise and take possession of this our inheritance for God has promised to give it to us "as a prey" (Jerem. 45:5) meaning that it will not come to us without a price: we have to suffer loss (the loss of our lives, if we are to save our lives - Phil.3:8) This outer court experience of Haran which includes the baptism of the Holy spirit does not have the ability to save our souls to the fullest, it is just a first measure or a down payment seeing that Canaan life is beyond the Pentecostal experience. This is the major stumbling block of many in the church today. Here in Haran, we find that the church lacks the life and power to overcome all the evil ways, traditions and culture of Canaan, for we can only overcome the Canaanites by moving out of this Haran experience and actually going into Canaan.

This was exactly why God had to prevail and encouraged Abram to move on despite all the comfort, wealth, blessings and prosperity that God had blessed him with in Haran. There are many who like to claim and associate with this "comfort zone" of Haran/Pentecostal experience.

Thus, God brought the word again to him to move on as shown in Gen. 12:1

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy fathers house, unto a land that I will show thee."

The scripture uses the phrase: Now the Lord "had said" unto Abram, to indicate that this word was probably a reminder and emphasis of God's call for Abraham to come out from his nativity and culture of idolatry in Ur of the Chaldees - he needed to move as far away from there as possible. Hence, the danger of tarrying

and dilly-dallying in Haran. This is because Haran was next door to Ur of the Chaldees and the possibility existed for him to return thither, if he was not watchful. This experience is very similar to the situation of the people of God in these end times where the church has so much entangled herself with the customs, practices, traditions, ways, thinking and culture of the world (Ur of the Chaldees) so much so that the chief values of the culture of Ur of the Chaldees (Ashtaroth and Baal worship in the form of sex, pleasure, entertainment, love of money/worship of mammon) have now been firmly entrenched in the mind/soul of the average believer in Christ...friendship with the world is enmity against God (James 4:4), "...*Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*" (11.Tim 3:4), the gospel/doctrine/teaching of prosperity which says that "...*gain is godliness*" (1 Tim. 6:5) etc.

This is quite similar to the situation in Israel where the people began to mingle and corrupt themselves with the culture, manner of life of the Canaanites that they turned their backs on God, time and time again (Deut. 4,7).

Thus, we see then that the word of God is coming again to the people of God as it did to Abraham. What saith the scriptures then?

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness; and what communion hath light with darkness; vs.15 "And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

Vs.16 "And what agreement hath the temple of God (you and I) with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Vs.17 "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you."

Vs.18 “*And I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*”

This scripture is self-explanatory as it emphasizes the point that we are not to tarry in Haran like Abraham, we have to move as far away from the culture, traditions, customs, beliefs and practices of our nativity, as possible. Hence, the call to move on beyond the Pentecostal/Haran experience of blessing, rejoicing, shouting, prosperity, wealth, physical/material increase, to a deeper experience in our relationship with our God – that of Canaan, that of possessing our possessions, that of looking inwards into our souls to realize that the reality of the matter is that our soul is that promised land and is being presently occupied by the Canaanites. The Canaanites in this context, speak and represent (in the spirit) the natures, demons, spirits, tendencies, attitudes and strongholds in our soul natures of will, emotion, desire and mind which are presently usurping the position and place of the nature of Christ. The harvest or the coming forth in fullness of the nature of Christ within our souls would only be a reality as we “pull down” or put off “the old man” or fleshly nature of our “Nigerianness” or “Africanness” or “Americanness”.

There yet remaineth a rest therefore unto the people of God. It is little wonder then that the word of the Lord to Abraham is the same command sounding forth from the trumpet of the Lord, coming to all pilgrims and wayfaring men “*And the Lord had said unto Abraham*” is a clarion call for the seed of Abraham to depart from Haran and to begin to confront the Canaanitish natures of our personalities and ancestry. There is war in Heaven – this speaks of the realm of heaven within our soul natures wherein dwelleth, and reigneth the prince of the power of the air.

CANAAN: The promised land of Canaan speaks prophetically of the last two dimensions of the Holy place and Holiest of all (Holy of Holies) according to the pattern of the Tabernacle of Moses, which illustrates the process through which God is preparing

himself a fitting dwelling place/abode/tabernacle within the temple of the Human being: for man is the eternal dwelling place of God.

Abraham in response to God's dealing upon him in Haran, did leave Haran to go to Canaan. However, he took with him certain "weights" and "encumbrances" from Haran (which actually originated from his ancestry - Ur of the Chaldees) as represented by Lot, his brother's son. Gen.12: 4 -5 brings it out clearly:

Vs.4 "So Abraham departed, as the Lord has spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

Vs.5 "And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came."

LOT

Lot speaks of the flesh/carnality of Abraham. It actually spoke of his ancestry and linkages to Ur of the Chaldees. Thus, even though he had left Ur of the Chaldees (with its idolatrous customs, traditions and culture) he still had a soul tie with his nativity and ancestry for as long as Lot "tagged along". Therefore, he was in a place of mixture – he was in Canaan God's promise land and he was already bringing forth fruit seeing that "he was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Gen.13:2) but at the same time, Lot (which spoke of the works of the flesh) was also increasing (as shown in Gen. 13 v 5, just as the wheat and the tares situation). This is coupled with the fact that the "Canaanites was then in the land" (Gen.12:6). The "Canaanites" then in this context speaks of the kingdom and hierarchy of darkness as represented by the devil, his princes, rulers, devils and demons. Thus, there are essentially two realms of darkness that we are dealing with here:

- Ancestry represented by Lot and speaks of that which is familial.

- Satan and his cohorts of devils/demons and spirits represented by the “Canaanites that are in our land” (heart and soul)

The first dimension of Abraham’s sojourn in Canaan is illustrated by the Holy place experience – a place of mixture whereby we have begun to partake of the blessings and increase of the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey but also a place of the ‘tare’ represented by ancestral speaking of Lot and the idolatrous culture/customs of the Canaanites. This is exactly the dilemma of the believer today who has ‘left’ the Egypt of his culture and nativity physically only to discover that “...*within me dwelleth no good thing*” - Rom.7: 18. He is discovering that within his soul/nature or emotion, will, desires and mind, there are many Lots and Canaanitish attachments and soul ties that are busy weighing and pulling him back, as he attempts to press on. The devil only has to pull the cord of traditional marriage, ethnicity, male son, burial rites etc for the believer to say it does not matter, as he bows to the different music that the enemy causes to be sounded, all in a bid to get him to bow to the image of the beast, but this time, within the believer’s heart. Thank God that even though all the other children of Israel compromised, Shedrack, Meshach and Abednego prevailed in resisting this idolatry at the plains of Dura (in Babylon) – Daniel 3.

The scripture thus is showing that the flesh dies hard and that for Abraham, it took him a long time, to fully obey God: to come out from his family, kindred and nation afterwhcih Lot “tagged along” for a long while before God had to bring a separation.

This is the situation of the Church today. Many attachments of culture, traditions, ancestral and familial traits are still ‘encumbering the ground’ and not allowing us to bring forth any fruit unto our God. The time of this separation is NOW, hence this urgent call is coming to the church to separate from Lot and the Canaanites that dwell with us in this Canaan: this realm of our inheritance of the nature of Christ within our souls.

The second dimension of Abraham's sojourn in Canaan is represented by the period after his separation from Lot or overcoming of his flesh, soul ties, nativity and culture as represented by Lot. His attachment to Lot served as a **veil** that separated him from both hearing clearly from God and also from settling down and possessing his possession. This period is a type of "the Holiest of all" experience for Abraham.

However the experience of possessing our possessions in Canaan can only come about according to the divine order of God: "*As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth*" (Isa. 6:9). It was only after Abraham travailed with his flesh (Lot) that the separation became a reality ...

Vs.6 "*And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together."*

The same picture is shown in Rev.12 where the devil and his cohorts were bound and thrown down, out of the heavens (of the soul realm of believers) to enable the brethren (who were dwellers in heaven – Rev.8: 20) to receive the kingdom of God within their souls ... for the kingdom of God is coming within the soul of man – Lk.17: 21.

A TIME TO TRAVAIL

Abraham and Lot (flesh, culture, traditions, carnal personality) were cohabiting quite peacefully and were mutually benefiting from one another, before God began to agitate him to leave Egypt and go back to the place where he called upon the name of the Lord at the first instance – Gen.13: 3-4. It was then after "*Abraham called on the name of the Lord ... vs.14*" that he came to realise that the mutual cohabiting relationship with his flesh (Lot) in Canaan, could no longer be of benefit to him, if he was to realize the burning vision and desire of entering into the rest God had impressed upon his heart while still in Ur of the Chaldees: the land

of his nativity. Yes, there remaineth “*a rest unto the people of God*” but this vision and desire can not and will not be experienced unless and until there is a separation from Lot – our flesh, personality, culture, traditions, ethnicity, nation, pride and patriotism etc. We must “*fight the good fight of faith*”, (1 Tim. 6:12) we must earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 1:3) ...there must be war in our heavens, before the dragon and his angels in our heavens will be cast down ... indeed, as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth.

Can a nation be born in a day? Can a nation be born without struggle? For long, the church has been comfortable and dependent upon our “Lot” for sustenance. “It does not really matter” was our line of argument and excuse. It enabled us to wave the matter aside but praise God that “the time of this ignorance God winked out” but NOW requires and is pressing upon every man to “examine himself” and “purify himself” Mal. 3:1-5; 1John 2:6, for the messenger of the covenant, the Lord himself, is set to return to his temple, even Jerusalem and Zion with the fury of judgement and cleansing, for it is the set time to favour Zion, it is the set time to bring a clean cut separation between the son of promise and the son of the bond woman ... “gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice” (Ps.50:5). Yea, it is even the time of the evening sacrifice and of midnight when the foolish and wise virgins are hearing the Trumpet of separation. This is a trumpet of war, it is the prophetic voice in Zion, declaring that it is time for the daughter of Zion that dwelleth in the midst of Babylon (Zech.2) (the world, Egypt, flesh, culture, custom and tradition) to awake out of slumber, for it is the appointed time to enter into the inner chamber (deeper level/realm of union or fellowship) with the Lord.

Gen. 13:7 says “*And there was strife**” the Hebrew word used here is “Riv” or “Ruv” and means among other things: to contest, complain, to plead a case, to wrestle, wrangle, grapple, contend,

*Strife (Riv/Ruv): Hebrew, Strong's concordance number: 7379

strife etc. The Lord is saying and signifying by the spirit that it is time to begin to contest the right and strength of the flesh to insist and to make a demand upon having and retaining a relationship with the people of God. This is the set time to “shake off” the dust of carnality, to arise out of the flesh (Isa. 28). This romance with Lot is over, says the spirit of the Lord unto the wise virgins. It is time to trim the lamp. It is time to get out of the covering of Lot and to come under the shadow of his embrace.

“*And Abram said unto Lot ... separate thyself, I pray thee, from me.*” Gen. 13:8-9. This was a very difficult and profound decision for Abraham to make but thank God he did. He overcame the yoke of the flesh and ancestry. He did not reckon with the emotional consequences of this action for they could not measure up to the benefits of coming into his rest... “*Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me.*” These are golden words that are like music to the ears of God’s elect at this hour, who are awakening in his likeness, who are awakening to the reality of God. **They are finding out that their true nativity, culture and nation is Zion** ... the Lord has loved the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob (Ps. 87:2). The walk with our God is truly the way of life. It is life itself for saith he “*this is life eternal, that we may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent*” John 17:3.

A TIME OF SEPARATION

Gen. 13 verse 11^b says “*And they separated themselves the one from the other.*” This is the testimony of God’s faithfulness to Abraham and it is a proclamation of God’s faithfulness and resolve to bring a people into this place of rest, this place of total and complete victory and freedom from all that Lot speaks of and represents. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Amen. It has always seemed like a fairy tale, like an impossibility for two brethren who intend to marry not to go through traditional marriage but bless the Lord that the testimony of our God is that ... “*and they (Abraham and Lot) separated themselves the one from the other.*” The same is the exact testimony that the Lord is giving and shall give to his

chosen ones in this hour who are receiving strength and encouragement to declare to Lot: “separate thyself, I pray thee, from me.”

There is a depth of fellowship and bliss, a rest that is gradually opening and shall open to these overcomers over the veil of personality traits (no matter how good they may seem) habits, frailties, besetting sins, weights etc. It is a place of total, unhindered communion and blissful union with our Lord and Master. Adam walked in such a realm. Abraham also tasted of it for when he had separated from Lot, the word of the Lord NOW came to him –

vs. 14 *“And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him”*

This is the promise of life that awaits those that heed this call

“... lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:”

Vs. 15 *“For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever...”*

Vs.17 *“Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.”*

The separation of Abraham from Lot opened up for him a new dimension (the second aspect) of possessing his possession – this had to do with dislodging the Canaanites who dwelt in the land. **This is the divine order of coming into the rest of God:** The fleshly/ancestral/personality openings in our souls must first of all be dealt with before we can drive out the Canaanites. Our obedience must be complete before we can judge every disobedience – 2 Cor. 10:6. All the Achans in our hearts must be judged before we can overcome the Ai’s of our lives. We cannot expect Michael (the arch angel that fighteth for the people of God) to prevail on our behalf when we are still fellowshiping with the accursed thing. Thus, the authority and boldness and command to arise and to possess our possessions only comes to those who in

reality have done the first commandment: separate from Lot. Worldliness must be cleansed from our priestly skirts. The prince of this earth must not have the privilege of finding anything of his in us, lest he has a reason to defy our rebuke.

“Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord” (Gen. 13:18). May the Lord God Almighty grant each and every one of us this rest of dwelling in his presence as overcomers out of every nation, tribe, kindred, out of every tongue, from every corner of the earth. May he cause us to grow up unto him as tender plants, basking in the blaze of His sun of righteousness. May we begin to awaken to righteousness, Godliness and Holiness. May the power and pull of Lot loosen with each passing moment. Heal us, oh our God. Heal our backsliding and restore unto yourself a people worthy of your inheritance. Amen.

CHAPTER 7

TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

In Hebrews 6:1. The scripture says *“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection (maturity): not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works; and of faith toward God”*.

“Dead works” speak of the culture, life style, way of life, the thought system and process of humanity which are directly opposed to the knowledge of God. It is essentially a rebellion against God and righteousness. It is the sum total of the activities of man (which seem perfectly normal and acceptable in his own estimation - There is a way that seemeth right - Prov. 14:12) but in God’s righteous judgment, it is a bundle of ungodliness, rebellion, and indeed, dead works.

TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE AS IDOLATRY

One of the cardinal manifestations or pillars of this rebellious culture of “dead works” is traditional marriage. There are only two forms of marriage: “traditional marriage” and “true marriage”. While “true marriage” is that joining of man and woman in a godly and holy union in righteousness wherein only God receives the honour and worship. “Traditional marriage” on the contrary is the joining of man and woman according to the counsel of the elders, in fulfillment of the culture and traditions and custom of the land wherein the gods, princes, ruling spirits or deities of the land and ultimately the devil himself, gets honoured and appeased. Thus, traditional marriage is a worship unto Baal and Ashtaroth while true marriage is a reflection of the union between Christ the head (Jesus Christ) and the body of Christ, which is the Church. This is the working in which tradition and culture of the people take a backstage and Christ is exalted and honoured.

It is therefore evident, that traditional marriage is a form of idolatry seeing that the major object of worship is the appeasement of the gods of the family and the land. Giving God his due honour is not the sole or major objective here. All would agree that it is a time of “giving unto Caesar the things that are Caesars”. How sacrilegious and abominable.

In order to fully appreciate the depth of the ungodliness of traditional marriage, we need to go into the word of God for ourselves:

Whoredom: The foundation of traditional marriage is whoredom and idolatry. The word “whoredom” essentially means a harlot, to play the harlot, to join oneself with spirits or idols. 1Cor 6:16.

The operation of the spirit of whoredom is basically the same in every culture and clime, be they African, European, American, Asian etc. The manifestations may vary, but the principles are still the same and indeed originated from the same idolatrous worship by Nimrod of Baal and Ashtaroth in Babel (Gen 11). Thus, traditional marriage is addressing the “English white wedding” culture in much the same way as that of the “African traditional wedding”. The civilized culture of Europe or America does not imply righteousness or Godliness. The bottomline is that these practices are heathenic and originated from Baal worship in ancient times. Hence, it is very pertinent and necessary for God’s people in this age and time to revisit these practices which actually are part and parcel of Baal worship. May the Lord enlighten our eyes and hearts to perceive the true and righteous ways of the kingdom, for the things of the kingdom are not synonymous with English or western culture and tradition. As a matter of fact, present-day western civilization is an offshoot of the Roman Empire and culture as shown by the vision of Daniel 3. The feet of clay mixed with iron as the last kingdom of the beast represents the Roman Empire. Western education, architecture, engineering, medicine etc. all have roots in Rome. Example: the supreme court

building in Washington D. C., USA is a Roman-styled edifice with its characteristic and picturesque columns, pillars and steps. The democratic form of government particularly the institution of the senate and parliament, the proletariat or masses, and the praetorium or the armed forces, again are all Roman vestiges and carry-over into our modern civilization.

THE ROOT OF TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

In the same vein, the workings of traditional marriage are steeped in the pagan and idolatrous culture and form of worship of the Roman culture which had as its head the emperor who was both a political and spiritual head. As political head, he was the emperor and as religious head, he was the Pontifex Maximus (The Chief Ruler, Pope or Holy Father) under whom a hierarchy of priests functioned in teaching, transmitting and keeping the oaths, secrets and mysteries of the Baal and occult religious worship of Rome.

Overtime, the early church got organized and integrated into this mixture of baal worship and the papal system of worship under the banner of catholicism. The pope was pronounced the vicar of Christ (Vicarius Fili Dei) – Vice Christ. This usurpation of the position of Christ both in the heart and minds of God’s people was the final nail that enthroned Baal worship as accepted as Christian. Under this dispensation, the celebration of the birthday of Nimrod on December 25th became Christianized as Christmas – celebration of the birth of Christ, the 40 day weeping for Tamnuz: the god of fertility was termed a period of lent and fasting. The celebration and veneration of Astarte as Ishtar and the Death of Nimrod became known as the Easter celebration of the Death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In the same token, the idolatrous practices of the wedding cake, the white wedding garment, the black/dark suit of the groom; the confetti throwing/shower, the throwing of the bouquet of flowers, bridal dance, bachelor’s eve, spinster’s night, honey moon etc. all became “born again” or Christianized to mean righteousness. Thus,

the pagan rituals of Rome and papal/occult religion were hoisted upon God's people as being Christian.

In the mean time, the native and indigenous idolatrous practices which originated and descended to us from Babel just as did its counterpart of Roman culture, were also transformed into "acceptable" garb by the early missionaries. While on one hand, establishing "western white wedding" as being the "thus saith the Lord", they either rejected whole sale some aspects of African traditional marriage or modified them as they deemed fit. Thus, what we have known as marriage involved various stages of covenants – beginning with the requirement by the Church for the intending couple to satisfy the traditions of the elders and family in the Christianized "traditional marriage", as a prerequisite for the blessing of the church in the "white wedding". The Court Registry marriage being optional.

However, the above scenario is an ungodly mixture and a contraption of the devil in that both the so called traditional marriage of Africa and the white wedding of Europe/England are all different shades or spectrum or manifestations of the same thing: Baal worship and whoredom which neither meet the standard of scripture nor the approval of God. Now is the time to judge this ungodliness in the courts of Zion, that the daughter of Zion that dwelleth in the midst of Babylon might be delivered. Come out of her, my people, saith the Lord.

THE BASIS OF TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

The spirit of whoredom therefore is that working which causes or deceives a man to be joined unto an idol (and in actual fact) to be joined to a spirit or Baal. This multi-dimensional application of whoredom is brought out by the following scriptures:

- Numbers 25:3 "*And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel*".

Vs 5 “*And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, slay ye every one his men, that were joined unto Baal-peor.*”

- Hosea 4:17 “*Ephraim is joined to Idols: let him alone.*”

The above scriptures state clearly that an individual or a people can be joined to idols and this is idolatry.

- Exod 34:15 “*Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the Land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice;*
Vs 16 “*And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods”*
- Hosea 4:12 “*My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredom hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God”.*

Here the scriptures show that the spirit of whoredom causes men to go awhoring after other gods or idols. Specifically, it states that in marrying the daughters of the Canaanites (which also speaks of a believer who submits to the customs, traditions of the people through the effect/covering of the spirit of whoredoms), they would go a whoring after their gods and cause their union to go awhoring after these idols and to become joined to them.

- Hosea 1:2 “*... And the Lord said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the lord.*”

To submit one’s marriage to traditions and customs of the people (which are not God-ordained) is to covenant with the spirit of

whoredoms and this is erring and departing from the counsels and precepts of the Lord, as shown in the above scriptures.

Thus, the above scriptures show very clearly that the basis of traditional marriage is whoredom and idolatry. In fact, the scriptures show that there is a vicious circle connecting traditional marriage, whoredoms and idolatry. Thus, when believers submit themselves to the demands, processes and rituals of traditional marriage, it amounts to whoredom and idolatry in that these customs (no matter how much they have been made to look righteous or civilized) are designed as a form of worship to the familiar spirits and ruling spirits of the Land. For instance, when intending Christian couples collect the **list of requirements** from the bride-to-be parents, the usual practice is to try to “purge” the list of the apparently evil or devilish requirements. Thus, instead of buying alcohol, soft-drinks or/and money are substituted. However, before the standard of scripture (which is the revealed will of the father to us) there is no difference, for they amount to the same abomination of bowing down to the traditions of the land, no matter the attempt to Christianize the process.

This is based on the counsel of the word of God. In Exod 34:15-16, it is stated that submission to the spirit of whoredom in worshipping the idols or familial spirits which demand worship during and through traditional marriage leads to sacrificing to the gods and to eat of things sacrificed to idols. Therefore, we see that the essential elements of traditional worship involve the following:

- ❖ The traditional covenant of marriage.
- ❖ Tokens, sacrifices and offerings of traditional marriage.
- ❖ Feasting or eating things sacrificed to idols.
- ❖ The defilement of the marriage by the spirit of whoredom.

THE TRADITIONAL COVENANT OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is a covenant between two consenting adults: male and female. In the original vision and purpose of God in instituting

marriage, it was done to reflect the union of Christ and the body or bride of Christ. This Union was practically demonstrated by Adam and Eve in that the two individuals originated from the first Adam who was both male and female in one flesh (Gen 5:1-3). Thus the essence of marriage is to bring a union in God of the man and woman. Here, this union is established by God, dedicated unto God and sustained by God. God originated marriage to be an instrument of fellowship, overcoming and worship of the believers unto their God.

However, the object and purpose of traditional marriage is quite the direct opposite and in actual fact, a rebellion against the revealed will of God in marriage. The purpose of traditional marriage is to bring forth children so that the family name or tribal lineage is sustained. The traditional covenant of marriage is established by the familial spirits (spirits of the ancestors), demons and ruling spirits of the locality of the people. Hence, the culture, customs, traditions and demands of the land must be followed, upheld and strictly observed. The honour goes to these idols and spirits (even though these may be veiled in certain circumstance by using Christian terms to address them).

In this ceremony of traditional covenant of marriage, the officiating personalities are the traditional priests consisting of the chiefs/elders of the bride's family and the other Chiefs/Elders/Uncles/Aunties of the family and Community. In some cases, the consecrated traditional "juju priest" of the village is remotely involved (in that he may not be physically present although his views, counsels and divination are sought after and upheld even if this is done out of fear).

In this ceremony, the elders acting as the traditional priesthood officiate to bring about the covenant of marriage between the man and the woman. They also dedicate this union unto the idols and familiar spirits and ruling spirits of the land. In most cases, this is usually done by laying on of hands of the chiefs, elders and parents

and uncles of the bride during the traditional blessing of the marriage in which traditional prayers are offered to the spirits of the ancestors (if the people are religious, the name of Jesus is substituted at this stage, but this prayer is unacceptable. This is really immaterial and cosmetic since the spirit of the ceremony is one that is based on rebellion to the revealed counsel of the lord).

In most cases, this covenant of marriage between the couple is demonstrated by the token of partaking of a drink offering which is usually a cup of palm wine (which may be christianized to be fruit juice, soft-drink or a malt drink). Thus, it is crystal clear that this joining is basically ungodly, unrighteous and constitutes a corruption of what the covenant of marriage should be.

THE TOKENS, SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS OF TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

The ceremony of traditional marriage which is established and supervised by the spirit of whoredom entails another important component which is brought out by Exod 34:15-16. It has to do with the sacrifices made to the idols and evil spirits. Vs 15 “...*and they go awhoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods*”. The word of God says clearly in 1Cor 6:17 : “*wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you*”. We are to come out from among them, we are not to touch the unclean thing. But, the church has also played the harlot in this matter of traditional marriage. She has gone awhoring and joined herself to idols and spirits which have caused her to err.

It is established that the basic celebration of traditional marriage involves a sacrifice to the gods and idols of the family and the land. This is usually carried out in a subtle manner and involves a complex mix of tokens, sacrifices and offerings which together constitute idol worship and whoredom.

In the following treatise, we shall run th-rough these items:

The List: This is a “list of items” which the family of the bride gives to the bridegroom. It consists of all sorts of things including food items (yams etc), drinks, animals (goat, chicken, cattle etc), household items etc. Despite the attempts to hide its true purpose and meaning, the basis of this list is covetousness which thing is idolatry according to Colossians 3:5. This covetousness causes many families to treat their daughters as a “commercial commodity” that is being sold off as one whose time to yield the fruits of the family’s investments has come. In other words, it is payback time and the groom is the one that reluctantly carries the burden and cost of this idolatry. This spirit of covetousness is actually the basis of bride-price etc. In certain cultures in which women and children are seen as liabilities, large sums of money and gifts are given or demanded as compensation. In essence, the offerings of the soul through the emotions and passions exerted in this harrowing experience, all go up as an oblation and offering of ungodliness, hatred, sadness, bitterness, strife and contention to the devil. **This is typical Baal worship**, being that, it is the devil who derives so much life from the strife, contention, covetousness and lust (James 3:13-18).

The other point is that the demanding of gifts etc is unchristian and ungodly. This is shown by the example of Abraham’s servant Eleazar who gave gifts to Rebecca’s family (in Gen. 24) out of his own intention and volition. There was no manipulation, threat and cajoling because manipulation is part of the working of witchcraft. The use to which some of the items in the list are put is another pointer that it is ungodly. For instance, the goat/animal sacrifice is actually representative of the couple and the spilling of the blood speaks of a covenant between the couple and the bride’s family and community. This is done in defiance to God’s word which says that what God has joined together, let no man (no spirits) put asunder (or come in-between). This explains some of the resistance that Christian couples (who have gone through traditional marriage) experience in that this spirit of whoredom begins to defile, defy and attack their union as husband and wife.

CHAPTER 8

REDEMPTION MONEY: DOWRY/BRIDE PRICE

The issue of dowry is central to the priesthood of traditional marriage. It has many dimensions and is variously known by different names in different cultures. These names include bride price and redemption money. This payment is a token, which has a great and grave spiritual meaning and consequences. Money is blood being that money is gotten from the sweat or labour of man according to Gen. 3:17-19. Blood represents the life of the individual according to Lev. 17:11. Thus, when money as dowry is given in this context of the covenant of traditional marriage priesthood, it speaks not only of an exchange and a mingling of life but it actually speaks of a submission of one's life and in this context, the submission of the marriage to the ruler-ship and dominion of the ruling spirits and Baal. Thus, it is not just a mere observance of ceremony or protocol of marriage but this token of dowry is a sacrifice and worship unto Baal. It is an offering of blood unto these dumb idols that produces a "spiritual lameness and dumbness" in the marriage (Ps. 106:36; Deut. 7:25-26).

In the scriptures there are two Hebrew words translated as dowry:

- "Zebed" (Hebrew)^a which means gift or to endue or endow and endowment. The word "dowry" is an English derivative of endowment. It is only used in one scripture in Gen.30: 20 "*And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry ²⁰⁶⁵ (gift): now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons and she called his name Zebulum.*"
- "Mohar" (Hebrew)^b which means a price (for a wife), to bargain (for a wife), to wed. Here, there are three scriptures in which this word is translated as dowry:

a. Strong's Concordance reference Number: 2065 (Old Testament)

b. Strong's Concordance reference Number: 4119 (Old Testament)

Gen. 34:12 “Ask me never so much dowry⁴¹¹⁹ and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.” This scripture is better understood when we read it from the original literal translation from the Hebrew –Greek – English interlinear Bible by Jay Green* “heap on me ever so much bride price⁴¹¹⁹ and gift, and I will give as you say to me, but give me the girl for a wife.” Here Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, (Gen. 34:2) was willing to pay anything for Dinah, the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob. However, the background of this whole act was that Shechem raped Dinah. In other words, we are looking at an act of lewdness, whoredom and violence on the part of both Dinah and Shechem. In Dinah’s case, her heart went after the wiles and ways of vanity and whoredom of the daughters of the land (the Hivites, who were one of the sons of Canaan – Gen. 10:17) whose culture was that of lewdness and whoredom unto Baal and ashteroth. Gen. 34:1 puts it very clearly: “And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.” These daughters of the land were so ungodly and whorish that God warned the children of Israel to keep their sons and daughters away from them as seen in Exodus 34: 11-16:

Verse 11 “Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.”

Verse 12 “Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant (league or friendship) with the inhabitants (daughters) of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee:”

Verse 15 “Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one (out of friendship/league) call thee (Dinah) and thou eat of his sacrifice”

*Jay Green. Hebrew – Greek – English Interlinear Bible. Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, USA.

Verse 16 “...and their daughters (Dinah’s friends) go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons (or Dinah) go a whoring after their gods.”

Thus, we see from Gen. 34:1, that Dinah went out to play with these daughters of the Hivites (probably during one of their pagan festivals of fertility) and under the atmosphere of their whoredom and lewdness, Shechem, “an honourable man” a prince and son of a prince of the Hivite, with all his influence, power and charisma “saw her and took her, and lay with her and defiled her (verse 2). He “took” her, “lay” with her, and “defiled” her. It is clear that we are dealing with whoredom and ungodliness here, which actually is the basis of traditional marriage. Thus, Shechem in acting out the script of “taking Dinah (by seduction and violence) unto himself for a wife, according to their own Hivite culture, offered to pay a bride price for Dinah. He was the one that offered to pay the bride price or dowry. The offer did not emanate from Jacob or his sons. In fact, they rejected this Canaanite culture of bride price as shown in Gen. 34:13-17.

Thus, the culture of bride price/dowry as shown in this context, was a heathenic, Canaanitish (Hivite) culture of “taking” a wife. It is also a form of punishment or payment or endowment that a man pays for a woman whom he had defiled as shown in this story of Dinah and Shechem.

THE PRICE FOR DEFILEMENT

Exodus 22:16:17

Verse 16 “*And if a man entice (lures) a maid (virgin), that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow (pay a price) her to be his wife.*”

Verse 17 “*If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay (weigh) money according to the dowry (price) of virgins.*”

Again, this scripture is dealing with a situation of whoredom and not true love that would normally occur between two intending adults who wish to get married. The case here is one of deceit, luring, enticement, manipulation of emotions, and some form of

witchcraft. The scripture then records God's counsel for dealing with such unclean, carry-over behaviour and practices from the Canaanites (among whom they dwelt e.g. Shechem and Dinah). In this case, the man is to pay a penalty or price which is that he must marry her (if her father agrees) or he is to pay a stipulated sum of money (if her father refuses for him to marry her). This stipulated sum is specified in another scripture – Deut. 22:28 – 29:

Verse 28 *“If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found.”*

Verse 29 *“Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver and she shall be his wife, because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.”*

This is quite clear that the purpose of the price of fifty shekels of silver is to atone for the humiliation of this virgin and added unto this is that the man is not permitted to divorce her.

SAUL AND DAVID

1 Samuel 18: 6-30

Verse 25 *“And Saul said, thus shall ye say to David, the king desireth not any dowry, but a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.”*

Here, the scripture gives us an insight into the motivation of Saul in asking for a dowry. It was evil, it was to create an occasion for David to die in warfare. Thus, the motivation was wrong in as much as the practice of dowry or bride price is ungodly. The following scriptures further highlight this evil motivation:

Verse 7 *“And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.”*

Verse 8 *“And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, they have ascribed unto David*

ten thousand, and to me they have ascribed but thousands, and what can he have more but the kingdom?”

Verse 9 “And Saul eyed David from that day forward”

Verse 10 “And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul’s hand.”

Verse 11 “And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it....”

Verse 12 “And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul. Verse 17 “And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the Lord’s battles. For Saul said, let not mine hand be upon him but let the hand of the philistines be upon him.”

The above scriptures are a beautiful portrayal of the workings of whoredom and wickedness in the heart of king Saul. He opened up his heart unto the devil through jealousy, envy and bitterness. Hence, God had no choice but to justly permit an evil spirit to enter into him (compare with the case of Judas, who betrayed Jesus: Satan also entered his heart when he became offended in Jesus – Lk 22:3, John 13:27). This evil spirit was both a deceitful and religious spirit (it caused Saul to prophesy) and also a spirit of death. In influencing Saul to try to kill David, Saul used the javelin. When this did not seem to succeed, the evil spirit went on to hatch the idea in him of using his daughters as a bait for David. Thus, he was moved by the evil spirit to play the card of dowry – asking for a hundred foreskins of the philistines. What an ungodly, immoral, lewd and whorish price to pay. This clearly was an unrighteous practice. It is not godly. It is not an example for God’s people to follow.

In summary then, we can see that in looking at the above scriptures in which dowry was mentioned: they were all based on unrighteousness, ungodliness, evil motivation, wickedness and

murder. There was not one case in which the Lord himself counseled that it should be a pattern to be followed in normal relationship in which two God – fearing people intend to get married. No, not even one.

JACOB’S LABOUR FOR HIS TWO WIVES

This scenario is one that deserves very close scrutiny because some believers are using this scripture as their basis for believing that bride price/dowry is godly and scriptural. This scripture is found in Gen. 29:15-30:

Verse 15 *“And Laban said unto Jacob, because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for naught? Tell me, what shall thy wages be?”*

This issue here is one of work/labour and then reward/payment of wages. There was no suspicion or suggestion on the part of Laban that Jacob’s wages would serve as dowry. Jacob was the one who decided that his reward was to be Rachel. There is no way that this would then amount to being a dowry. He could have named anything else as his wages and it would have been accepted by Laban. Infact, Laban paid Jacob wages after his marriage to his two daughters (see Gen 30:25-34).

DOWRY AS AN OFFERING UNTO BAAL

We therefore see that there is no teaching in the scriptures that sets forth the doctrine that dowry/bride price should be paid by believers or God’s people as part of the tokens of the covenant of marriage. What we have seen on the contrary is that dowry or bride price is a practice of the heathen ie people of the world in which it forms a very important part of the worship of Baal in the ceremony of traditional marriage.

In our contemporary African and Nigerian societies, bride price/dowry is a token money that is demanded by the bride’s family during traditional marriage. Here, the oldest male member of the family acts as the family head. In a more significant sense,

he acts as the traditional priest who receives the money on behalf of the ruling spirit/familial spirits who lay a claim over the bride, being that she is born under their territorial command, ruler-ship and domain. Thus, the money as a token, is usually small / little in amount. The significance of this bride price is that the money paid serves as redemption money to redeem or ransom the damsel from the control of ownership of Baal. It also serves as an appeasement to these evil and wicked spirits, that they may bless the union, since Baal and Ashtaroth are also the fertility deities in these cultures.

DOWRY AS REDEMPTION MONEY

The payment of dowry is not just an offering to the ruling spirits, it is more, importantly the payment of a price to buy back or redeem a damsel from the ownership of her parents and family (in the natural). However, the act of paying the dowry is also a spiritual thing, which is more significant than the natural meaning. Thus, the spiritual speaking points to the money/price paid to the ruling spirits through an intermediary (in this case, the traditional priest). This intermediary or traditional priest is the head of the family who collects the token money on behalf of the spirits.

It is necessary to settle this question of payment of dowry on the basis of what the scriptures teach. We have already seen that the scriptures do not command God's people to pay this redemption money. However, we still see a need to further establish this truth by looking at the principle behind the payment of redemption money and why the devil and the custodians of culture and traditions insist that it must be paid during the ceremony of the covenant of marriage. The word "redemption" in both the Hebrew (old testament) and the Greek (new testament) carry the same meaning of: to buy back, to purchase, to release on receipt or ransom, paying the ransom to set free or at liberty etc. In the scriptures, the principle of redemption has about four (4) dimensions:

- ❖ Exagorazo^a (Greek): the price or ransom paid to set the captive or slave free.
- ❖ Lutroo^b (Greek): the actual deliverance on payment of the price of redemption money.
- ❖ Gaal^a (Hebrew): this is the one who has the responsibility to redeem – for instance, the Near kinsman or kinsman – redeemer is the blood relation that has the right or responsibility to be a redeemer.
- ❖ Pedah^b (Hebrew): this speaks of the one or spirit who exercises dominion or ownership right over that which is in bondage. Thus, it is this owner that dictates and receives the “exagorazo” or price of redemption.

We shall now proceed to apply these dimensions of redemption to the issue of dowry as redemption money in traditional marriage:

DOMINION RIGHT: The hierarchy of the kingdom of darkness is such that there are very strong and wicked spirits who have a dominion right over different territories or palities of the world. These spirits are called principalities – princes of palities. According to Eph. 6:12 “... *we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers...*”. These principalities are creatures of darkness whose nature it is to exercise dominion over men who are born into their dominion. This is a God-given right to them being that they wrestled this power from the first Adam through cunningness, seduction, deceit and subilty (Gen. 3:1-21, Matt. 4:1-11, 2 Cor 4:4-6). The warfare of the Church in traditional marriage is not just against the rulers, elders, chiefs, traditions and culture of the land, but rather it is against the principalities who have influenced these traditional priests to set forth these wicked ordinances or processes of marriage.

a. Strong’s Concordance reference Number: 1805 (New Testament)

b. Strong’s Concordance reference Number: 3084 (New Testament)

a. Strong’s Concordance reference Number: 1350 (Old Testament)

b. Strong’s Concordance reference Number: 6299 (Old Testament)

An example of such a principality is the prince of Persia, against whom Daniel had to contend in the matter of the deliverance of God's people from the bondage of Babylon – Dan 9: 9-11. Thus, this covering works to make a demand of ownership over every child born in his dominion. It thus works to withstand any attempt to deliver the captive out of his chains of bondage. “...*the prince of Persia withstood me....* – Dan 10: 13.

Thus, these ruling spirits work through an intermediary or priests whose function it is to preserve, promote, propagate and promulgate rules, traditions, customs of the land in relation to human relationships in the community or polity such as traditional marriage. It is these priests who now act as fronts for these ruling spirits. For instance, there are countless stories in different communities, of how the traditions of the people (such as dances of maidens or young men, fertility dances, the exact sum of the bride price, the tokens of items which must be presented as gifts before a maiden is given out in marriage etc) were handed down to the ancestors, founders of the community or polity, elders and chiefs, through visions, dreams or various strange or dramatic encounters with spirits or demons during times of war, hardship, festivities, at the riverside etc.

This demand for redemption money is further illustrated by the scripture in Num. 3: 11-51:

Verse 12 “*And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the first born that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine;*”

Verse 13 “*Because all the first born are mine; for on the day that I smote all the first born in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the first born in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the Lord.*”

Here, the Lord God says that all the firstborn of Israel were his “... *they are mine*” this is in direct contrast to the firstborn of Egypt who belonged to the gods of Egypt, beginning from the firstborn of Pharaoh to the firstborn of the beasts in Egypt: Exodus 12:12

“For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgement: I am the Lord.”

GOD’S OF EGYPT

Thus, in this case there were two who had dominion rights: in Egypt, the gods of Egypt, acting through Pharaoh, his magicians and sorcerers, exercised dominion over the land while the Lord God Almighty was the sovereign ruler over the people of Israel. We then see the Lord stating that he had exchanged the life of every firstborn male with the Levites, meaning that the Levites were used to redeem the firstborn in Israel. However, it turned out that the number of all the firstborn males were more than the number of all the Levites by two hundred and seventy three souls (273) according to Num. 3:39-43:

Verse 39 *“All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the Lord, through out their families, all the males from a month old and upward, were twenty and two thousand (22,000).”*

Verse 43 *“And all the firstborn males by number of names, from a month old and upward, of those that were numbered of them, were twenty and two thousand, two hundred and threescore and thirteen (22,273).”*

When we compare the two countings, we see that there was a remainder of 273 that were not yet redeemed of the firstborn of Israel. The following scriptures specify how this riddle was solved through the payment of a price of a fixed sum of money – redemption money to the priest (Aaron and his sons) who were the representatives of the Lord God Almighty among his people as

were Pharaoh and his court of magicians, sorcerers and wizards in Egypt:

Verse 46 *“And for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen (273) of the firstborn of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites;”*

Verse 47 *“Thou shalt even take five shekels a piece by the poll, after the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take them: (the shekel is twenty gerahs:).”*

Verse 48 *“And thou shalt give the money, wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed, unto Aaron and to his sons.”*

(Aaron as priest received the redemption money just as the elders of the family as traditional priests of Baal receive the redemption money or dowry or bride price of traditional marriage from the bridegroom).

Verse 49 *“And Moses took the redemption money of them that were over and above them that were redeemed by the Levites:”*

Verse 51 *“And Moses gave the money of them that were redeemed unto Aaron and to his sons, according to the word of the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses.”*

The scripture is very explicit and is specific: it is the priest that receives the redemption money on behalf of the one that exercises the dominion right. In this case, God Almighty exercised this dominion right of ownership over all the firstborn in Israel and those to be redeemed had to pay a fixed sum to Aaron, on the behalf of God, in order to be redeemed. This same principle is what is operative as regards the payment of dowry or redemption money on behalf of a damsel or bride who is owned or resides in the domain/pality of a ruling spirit. She is required to be redeemed through the payment of a fixed sum of money, a token. This is to be collected in proxy of the ruling spirit by the traditional priests (elders, chiefs and head of the family) from the bridegroom.

THE RANSOM: thus, we see that there was a fixed sum of money, designated as the redemption money. This had to be paid for our redemption from the grip of the devil. This is the demand of the ruling spirits in traditional marriage, which they exert or collect through deceit by acting through the rules, customs and traditions of the land. This dowry or redemption money in traditional marriage is represented by the bride price money, the things demanded in the list of items and the life of the bride and the union of the couple in totality. The devil is asking for all. A little submission to this demand through giving these tokens, spiritually means that the covenant has been ratified and even God himself has to respect this covenant (compare with the covenant Joshua made with the Gibeonites though being deceived but which God had to respect. Saul was to pay dearly for breaking this covenant (1Samuel 22).

Thus, the ultimate demand of this dowry is that the devil is seeking to also rule over the marriages of the people of God and since the home is the bedrock or foundation of the church, he hopes to gain control (and has actually made an inroad into the church) through deceiving Christian couples to submit their marriages to him. Subtilty and deception is the name of the game. Eve fell for it and the church is still falling for this lie.

However, praise be to our God, that God has paid this specific demand for our life through the blood of Jesus. The devil demanded for life and God gave his only son as the redemption money or price:

Lamentations 3:58 “*O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast **REDEEMED** my life.”*”

Psalm 136:24 “*And hath **REDEEMED** us from our enemies...”*”

Psalm 106:10 “*And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and **REDEEMED** them from the hand of the enemy.”*”

Isaiah 52:3 “For thus saith the Lord, ye have sold yourselves for naught; and ye shall be **REDEEMED** without money.”

Isaiah 52:9 “Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath **REDEEMED** Jerusalem.”

Luke 1:68 “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and **REDEEMED** his people.”

1Corinthians 6:20 “For ye are bought with a **price**....”

1Corinthians 7:23 “Ye are bought with a **price**; be not ye the servants of men.

Rev. 5:9 “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain and hast **REDEEMED** us to God by the blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation;”

There are a legion of other scriptures that conclusively show that the price of our redemption, the dowry or redemption money demanded by the ruling spirits and the devil over our lives has been paid by Jesus Christ in full “... **Blotting out the handwritings of ordinances (rules, traditions, customs, dowry/redemption money etc) that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross**”. Col. 2:14.

Verse 15 “And having spoiled principalities (including the principalities of Africa and Nigeria) and power, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

Verse 16 “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon or of the Sabbath days (or of paying of bride price/redemption money).”

Verse 17 “Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”

Verse 18 “*Let no man beguile you (deceive you) of reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels (principalities and familiar spirits)....*”

LIBERTY: our liberty and deliverance from the bondage of the enemy is assured. We are not to pay any bride price for Christ has paid our redemption money on our behalf and the devil has acknowledged that the price has been paid in full:

Gal. 3:13 “*Christ hath **redeemed** us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.*”

Isaiah 53:11 “*He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.*”

Verse 12 “*Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”*

John 14:30 “*... for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.*”

Heb. 10:10 “*By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”*

WIFE CAPTURE AND WIFE PURCHASE

The actual origin and basis of dowry and bride price is based on the principles and practice of the twin evils of “wife capture” and “wife purchase”. Both of these are ancient practices and traditions among the heathen and pagan culture of the world. Let us look into the scripture to confirm these ungodly practices for ourselves:

Wife Capture: This is the practice in which an individual forcefully or by conquest takes another man's wife unto himself. Sometimes, the husband of the woman is killed in the process. This has been a universal culture among the gentile nations and is shown in the following scriptures:

Abram in Egypt: In Genesis 12:10-20, we find an interesting story between Abram and Pharaoh:

Genesis 12:11

“And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:”

Verse 12

“Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, this is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.”

The instructive point here is that Abram recognized the danger to his life due to the existence of this practice of “wife capture” through the killing of their husbands. This was a common practice among the Egyptians, which Abram was able to recognize and respond to. Pharaoh eventually took her into his “woman house” or “harem” and was subsequently plagued of the Lord until he restored her back to Abram.

Abraham and Abimelech: This principle of “wife capture” was not only restricted to the Egyptians. For Abraham had to resort again to the carnal method of claiming that he was Sarah's brother, when he sojourned in Gerar, in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 20:2

“And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.”

He took Sarah much in the same way that Pharaoh took her, being that both the people of Gerar and the Egyptians all shared this common culture of wife capture and the killing of the husbands of beautiful women. Hear Abraham:

Genesis 20:11

“And Abraham said, because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.”

DAVID AND BATH-SHEBA

King David in lusting after Bath-sheba, resorted to the culture of the Canaanites who did not fear God, but would slay the husband (their rival) of any beautiful woman whom they desired. The entire record of this ungodly happening is found in 2 Samuel 11:15

“And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.”

2 Samuel 11:26

“And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.”

2 Samuel 11:27

“And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.”

This act was similar to the ways of the canaanitish nations who took beautiful women unto themselves. They were actually taken into their “house of women” or “harem”. This act of “taking” the women was usually by his influence and the king’s fiat and authority. It was an ungodly culture and it has always displeased the LORD.

The Men of Benjamin: In Judges 21, we find a situation which is based on the principle of wife capture. Here, the men of Israel, in the rashness and heat of their anger had vowed not to give of their daughters to the men of Benjamin because of the defilement they had wrought to the concubine of the Levite in Judges chapter 19. When their anger subsided, they soon realized that “*a tribe was to be destroyed out of Israel*” (verse 17). Their remedy to this situation (they did not ask for the counsel of the LORD in this matter being that every man did that which was right in his eyes

because there was no king in Israel – verse 25) was to resort to the practice of “wife capture” which was rampant among the Canaanites:

Judges 21:20

“Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards;”

Verse 21

“And see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin.”

Verse 23

“And the children of Benjamin did so, and took them wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they went and returned unto their inheritance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them.”

The scriptures which we have examined above all go to show that in the ancient times, violence was a recognized and established way of taking a wife. This was very much contrary to the way Adam related to Eve. They came together out of love – he said “this is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh”. Love and not violence is the basis of marriage. Thus, the practice of “wife capture” is a departure from the righteous standard set by Adam and Eve.

It is not surprising then to also see from the study of the scriptures, that the culture of “wife capture” could subsequently graduate to “wife purchase” and then we will see this practice also give rise to the modern practice of “dowry and pride-price”. In all of this, the standard of God has remained the same: **LOVE**. This was the bond between Isaac and Rebecca, Boaz and Ruth and in all other godly union of man and woman in God. Wife capture, wife purchase and dowry (pride-price) are all aspects of Canaanitish tradition and culture which do not speak of love.

Wife Purchase: In this practice, money, gifts or a price is given in exchange for a woman. It is actually the rudimentary or elementary version of bride price. An example from the scripture would suffice at this point:

Pharaoh entertains Abraham: In this story of Abram and Sarah, Pharaoh treats Abram very well as a settlement for taking Sarah unto himself as seen in Genesis 12:14-17

Genesis 12:14

“And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.

Verse 15

The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

Verse 16

And he (Pharaoh) entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.”

The favour and entreatment from Pharaoh which Abram enjoyed was because of Sarah. It was given to him to appease him being that Pharaoh thought that Abram was Sarah's brother, a near kinsman. The entreatment was to serve as some kind of pay-off or wife purchase or bride price. It is therefore clear that in the spirit, the three traditional practices of wife capture, wife purchase and bride price are related. In fact, they are actually a spectrum of different sides, versions or manifestations of the same spirit which forbids to marry, in the true sense of what God ordained marriage to be.

Each of these traditional practices are ungodly, and unrighteous. They can not be “Christianized” or made to be “born again”. They are only meant to be cast off from among God's people. The Church needs to stand up for the truth and simplicity of the Gospel. God ordained marriage and it is only in returning to him that we would find true meaning and experience of what marriage is all about.

May the Lord strengthen and encourage the hearts of his people to heed the call and obey his voice at this hour. Amen.

CHAPTER 9

TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE FEAST

EATING THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

The scripture is replete and filled with examples and testimonies which show clearly that feasting (eating, drinking and dancing) is a cardinal pillar of Baal/Ashtaroah worship in the different cultures of the world. A few examples here would suffice:

MOAB

Numbers 25:1

“And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

Verse 2

And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.”

Here in the culture of Moab, the sacrifices that they made to their god (Baal-peor) was done through engaging in lewdness and whoredoms by the daughters of Moab, eating the sacrifices of the gods in the temple, dancing and worshipping of the idol/images in the temple. The following scripture highlight this evil deed:

Psalm 106:28

“They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.”

The eating of the sacrifices (of Baal-peor) in the plains of Moab by the children of Israel in this whoredom was a physical act which probably looked harmless. However, eating of sacrifices is symbolic and has grave consequences and implications. It speaks of a partaking of the dead, it denotes a submission, a worship, bringing one under the covering and influence of Baal. It also speaks of giving oneself in covenant to Baal.

EVE

This is similar to the eating of the apple by Eve. It looked simple and harmless but alas, it brought defilement to her and the human

race. It is a sure doorway through which the enemy gains access and control over the lives of God's people and their marriages.

In Genesis 3:13, it says:

“And the Lord God said unto the woman, what is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”

The testimony of Eve was that she was beguiled or misled by the serpent. It was subtle but powerful enough to get her defiled. The devil is still doing the same to the bride of Christ (the Woman in a corporate sense). He is still misleading God's people to eat of things sacrificed to idols in these pagan traditional marriage feasts (be they African or Western oriented). Beware that your soul is not merchandised for a morsel of meat – the pleasures of societal or parental acclaim and recognition. The devil may argue that it does not matter. Is it not just eating and drinking? But what saith the scriptures? 1 Kings 13:1-34 gives us the story of the young prophet from Judah who was commanded not to eat or drink. He was also misled by an old prophet (which speaks of the old Eli order in the Church whose anthem is “it does not matter”). The scriptures tell us what befell him when he submitted and ate in the old prophet's house. He drank – he partook of the rebellion and “the sacrifices of the dead” of this prophet:

1 Kings 13:9

“For so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.

Verse 18

He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him.

Verse 19

So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.

Verse 21

And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee,

Verse 22

But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.

RECHABITES

This story confirms to us the importance of eating and drinking. It is more than ordinary, there is more to it than meets the eye. Beware and take heed unto thyself lest thou eat of the sacrifices of the dead, in the bid of being a good brother or sister, in the name of being a good son or daughter. It is better to obey God rather than men. Compare this story with that of the Rechabites in Jeremiah 35:1-19 who refused to drink wine even when Jeremiah (an established vessel and messenger of the LORD) had given them the word of the LORD. Their conduct is commended by God:

Jeremiah 35:14-15

“The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me”.

[15] I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me.”

EGYPT

In the culture of the Egyptians, eating and drinking had spiritual implications, hence, they were very careful in choosing the place, the things and people with whom they dined with.

This is shown in the following scriptures:

Genesis 43:32

“And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.”

Genesis 46:34

“That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.”

Joseph having lived and interacted with the Egyptians knew of their culture, he himself had adjusted to the fact that he had to eat by himself, separate from the Egyptians “...and they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians.” The Egyptians knew that eating and drinking were not ordinary. They knew it was a form of worship. Their own form of worship was Baal/Ashtaroth worship although it was known by different names: Baal was worshipped as Osiris (the husband/son) or Horus (the sun god) while Ashtaroth was worshipped as Isis or the Queen of Heaven. It is interesting to note that this worship of Horus or Sun god by the Egyptians is depicted as “the all seeing eye” or “eye of Horus” of free masonry and also found on the back of the American one dollar bill.

This worship of Horus/Osiris through eating and drinking is similar to the worship of Bacchus, the god of Parties or feasting in ancient Greece. The culture may be ancient, but the spirit is not only the same but is waxing gross and wicked. In this worship of Bacchus, eating, drinking, dancing were acts and forms of giving

suck and receiving life from this spirit. This is the norm in all cultures, tribes and tongue, even if they explicitly deny that they are engaging in a form of worship. This does not change the bare fact that eating, drinking and dancing in the context of the establishment of a covenant such as the traditional marriage covenant has grave spiritual importance. One may look at it as just a social activity but the devil gets the worship because this is happening right within his sphere of “authority”. Traditional marriage feasting is worship unto Baal, no matter the extent to which “born again” people go to make it look Christian. God is not in it. It is Baal worship, pure and simple.

THE IDOLS AND FEASTING OF EGYPT

The children of Israel had been in Egypt for about four hundred years and had become quite acquainted with their culture of idol worship. When they came under pressure, they resorted to the idolatrous ways of the Egyptians: eating, drinking and feasting. The following scriptures in Exodus 32 brings this rebellion out very clearly:

Exodus 32:1

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.”

Verse 3

“And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.”

Verse 4

“And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf; and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”

Verse 5

“And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the Lord.”

Verse 6

“And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.”

The people rebelled against God and turned back in their hearts to Egypt. They then made unto themselves the similarity of the idols of the molten calf (a recognized symbol of witchcraft) and bowed down to worship this god with different offerings and feasting: eating, drinking and dancing/sporting. The feasting was similar to what they had been acquainted with while in Egypt. They had physically left Egypt but Egypt was still very much imprinted upon their hearts. The fellowship/communion with Egypt was still fresh in their taste, hence they kept longing for the delicacies of Egypt: cucumber, onions, garlic, leeches. This eating and drinking and playing was more than ordinary. It bordered on idolatry and became a stumbling block to the extent that while the flesh was still in their mouth, God slew them. Thus, eating and drinking, dancing and feasting were important components of the culture of Egypt which was centred on idolatry. In fact, in prophetic speakings, Egypt is symbolic of idolatry and witchcraft while Sodom is symbolic of whoredom and uncleanness. This fact is shown in –

Rev. 11:8

“And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.”

Egypt and its idols (gods) have always quenched and resisted the coming forth of the fruit of Christ within the souls of God’s people. Hence, it is part of God’s counsel to judge these idols/gods and the worship they receive including eating, drinking and feasting ... the scripture in Exodus 12:2 “... and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.” The culture and worship of the Egyptians was such that they worshipped all sorts of creatures including rivers (River Nile),

frogs, serpents, sun, moon, host of heaven etc. The Lord did pass through the land of Egypt and judged this idolatry.

In the context in which Egypt speaks of the worldly system, we also find that eating, drinking and feasting are hallmarks of their culture and worship, which is the worship of the dragon, who is the devil, that old serpent. The scriptures tell us more about eating, drinking and feasting in the worldly setting:

Matthew 24:37

“But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

Verse 38

“For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark,”

Verse 39

“And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away (for destruction or judgment); so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

The people of the world (those who are unbelieving) have Satan as the “god of this world” which deceives them to give themselves to the pleasures of eating, drinking and feasting especially in marrying and giving in marriage. Thus, this feast was not just viewed by the Lord to be a social activity, he saw and declared it to be a form of worship and distraction. This is the opposite of the partaking of the “**Tree of Life**” which the Lord counsels every man to partake of. One is unto the flesh while the other is unto the spirit. Another scripture in Luke 21:34 emphasizes this point to us:

“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.”

The same thing is spoken of regarding the time of destruction in the days of Lot in –

Luke 17:26-29

{26] “*And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.*”

[27] “*They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.*”

[28] “*Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;”*

[29] “*But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.*”

Thus, we see that one of the preoccupations of these two dispensations of Noah and Lot was that of feasting. To them, it was just a social thing, they were having fun and carrying on with their lives, but in the spirit, it was a form of defilement and worship unto the “god of this world” and finally led them to destruction. The same is true today in our own generation that is even more wicked, rebellious and untoward than them.

BABYLON

In the culture and worship of the Babylonians, eating and drinking were very important and central. The food to be eaten and drinks were as a matter of routine, first offered to their gods (as was also the case in Pagan Rome). Thus was the practice in the palace of king Nebuchadnezzar when Daniel was taken captive thereto:

Daniel 1:4-5,8

Verse 4

“*Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning (culture, custom, tradition) and the tongue of the Chaldeans.*”

As a matter of fact, the learning of the Chaldeans which was recognized the world over is that of magical arts, astrology and Astronomy. This included necromancy (Deut. 18:11) (communion/worship of the dead), prognostication (Isa. 47:13; Deut. 18:10) (foretelling and forecasting with the inspiration and influence of the heavenly bodies/hosts, moon and stars), spiritism (communings/fellowship/worship of evil spirits and demons) – Col. 2:18. Thus, there is the relationship or association between the magicians, sorcerers and Chaldeans as custodians of the Babylonian culture as shown in the following scriptures:

Daniel 2:2

“Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.”

Daniel 2:4

“Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.”

Daniel 2:10

“The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.”

Daniel 4:7

“Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.”

Daniel 5:7

“The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

The conclusion of the matter is that the scripture put it clearly that there were a people that were known and recognized as “the wise men of Babylon” and these were the Chaldeans, soothsayers, magicians and astrologers. They supervised the culture of Babylon which included the practice of offering the kings meat and drink/feasting unto the idols of Babylon. Daniel saw this idolatry and ungodliness and discerned that physically partaking and eating and drinking of the king’s feastings would defile him. This again confirms the fact that eating and drinking are acts of worship generally speaking in the sight of God because the Babylonians recognized the fact that physically engaging in eating and drinking especially things offered to idols, had spiritual dimensions and undertones. This was what Daniel saw in the king’s palace, that informed his decision to defy the king’s command as shown in the scriptures below:

Daniel 1:5

“And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank (which were both offered to idols routinely and was the reason Daniel refused to be defiled by them): so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.”

Daniel 1:8

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”

ROMANS AND GENTILES

In the heydays of the Roman Empire, Rome ruled the world, its tentacles extended to as far as Great Britain and beyond. As was the political influence of Rome, so also was its culture of paganism and idolatry which included eating things offered to idols. By the time the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ got to such heathen lands as Greece, Macedonia and Asia, these practices were common place amongst the populace. It is against this background that the apostles and elders counseled the gentile believers thus:

Acts 15:20

“But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.”

Acts 15:29

“That ye abstain (do not eat) from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.”

Acts 21:18

“And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.”

Acts 21:19

“And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.”

Acts 21:25

“As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.”

The brethren were very clear and explicit in counseling the gentile believers (which includes us in Nigeria and Africa) to abstain from things sacrificed/offered to idols, amongst other things. **This then means that traditional marriage feasting is NOT to be partaken of by believers.** It cannot and should not be Christianized in any way. It is ungodly and unholy. It is a leaven that has leavened the Church in our generation. The verdict is loud and clear that we are to abstain or avoid it. Any attempt to sanitize it is dead works, thus saith the Lord. The counsel of the LORD is that we should throw it away in its entirety, pure and simple.

THE OFFERINGS OF THE LORD (GOD’S PEOPLE)

The scriptures are quite clear that God’s people get tainted by idolatry when they eat things sacrificed to idols and that eating and

drinking are components of idolatry as shown by the confirmation by Paul of this matter, to the Corinthian Church:

1 Cor. 10:7

“Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”

In the above passage, Paul makes a definite linkage/association between idolatry and eating things sacrificed to idols: “...*the people sat down* (in the setting of a feast unto Baal) *to eat and drink, and rose up to play.*” Thus the Lord is saying that eating and drinking are definite components of idolatry such as the case in point, which pertains to traditional marriage feasts or ceremonies whether they are Western or African versions of this idolatry among God’s people.

JEZEBEL

Another scripture that addresses this abomination among God’s people is that which involves Jezebel, a priestess of Baal, a false prophet, daughter of a priest of Baal (EthBaal, king of the Zidonians) and wife of Ahab, an apostate king of Israel. This scripture is found in Revelation 2:20:

“Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.”

This is a direct rebuke from the LORD and he says that the spirit of Jezebel is operating within the Church of God, among God’s people, causing them to eat things sacrificed to idols. There was and (still is) idolatry within God’s people and the LORD is NOW rebuking it sternly.

The issue of eating and drinking may look ordinary, but the scriptures point to the contrary, showing that even ordinary eating and drinking among brethren does have spiritual connotations:

Peter: This has to do with the behaviour of the Jewish brethren as regards eating together with the Gentile brethren: Galatians 2:11-15

[11] *"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."*

[12] *"For before that certain came from James (Jewish brethren), he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision."*

[13] *"And the other Jews dissembled (disguised/hid their true thoughts or feelings) likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation (hiding of their true thoughts and feelings or hypocrisy)."*

[14] *"But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"*

The Jewish brethren (including Peter) by their attitude towards ordinary eating and drinking (sharing meals) with the Gentile brethren, were implying and insinuating that sharing meals with some one is not just a physical thing but actually a spiritual activity with deep speakings and meanings. In this situation, this matter of eating was linked to the leaven of ethnicity which was working a division among the brethren and consequently affecting the flow of Christ's life amongst the believers. Hence, Paul being led by the spirit rebuked the cultural and traditional soul ties amongst the Jewish brethren. This is the same situation today where culture, ethnicity and tradition are working like a cancer to leaven the body of Christ.

MANNA: ANGELS FOOD

In this situation, we see the people of God also partaking of physical food and nourishment which eventually played out to be that they were actually involved in a physical activity which was symbolic and also had deep spiritual undertones.

Their eating of manna for forty (40) years was a form of communion and worship and fellowship with the heavenly hosts of God Almighty, as shown in the following scriptures:

Psalm 78:23-25

“Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven,

[24] *“And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.”*

[25] *“Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full.”*

WITH FORNICATORS

Another dimension of this eating and drinking has to do with the defilement that one receives when we fellowship with people even brethren who are living in sin and rebellion as shown in the following passage:

1 Cor. 5:11

“But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.”

The reason for this is that by eating physically with such an one, we are brought into close fellowship with them, and the wrong spirit that has overtaken them, could also bring a covering upon us and we become defiled in the process.

MELCHIZEDEK

The scripture has this to say of Melchizedek regarding the issue of eating and drinking –

Genesis 14:18-20

“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.”

In the things and offerings of God, eating and drinking physically are acts of worship. Here Abraham communes with Melchizedek who blesses him and Abraham in return pays tithes to him.

[19] *“And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:”*

[20] *“And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.”*

BREAD AND WINE

Melchizedek brought unto Abram, “bread and wine”. These were food items which are symbolic. In the scriptures, we find that bread and wine are commonly used as food items of offerings unto God such as the shewbread and wine of the table of shewbread in the tabernacle of Moses (Exod. 25-38), in the tabernacle of David 2Sam 6:17-19, in the observance of Passover feast of unleavened bread (Exod.12:1-20) and in the Holy communion of the breaking of bread in the New Testament and in the meat (fellowship) offering of Lev. 2 and as the new meat offering of the feast of Pentecost (where the loaves were baked with leaven) of Lev. 23:15-23. Here, the food items of “bread and wine” speak of life and their sharing in these feasts and communion speak of the enacting and re-enactment of the covenant of life between believers and more importantly, with God Almighty.

Even Jesus referred to himself as “the living bread that came down from Heaven” or as “the bread of Heaven” John 6:35,51. In the same vein, the body of believers are referred to as being “one bread” 1 Cor. 10:17.

We can then compare the constant presence and usage of “bread and wine” in the offerings of our LORD to the re-occurrence of certain food items during the traditional ceremonies in our native

customs such as kola nuts, palm wine, alligator pepper etc. In certain communities, certain dishes must be prepared and eaten together during certain traditional rites and ceremonies such as plantains (Ijaws) and yams (Ibos). In fact, there are specific ceremonies performed in celebration of certain food items such as the New Yam Festival among the Ibos. It is symbolic of the worship of the fertility god, Amadioha where there is communal eating of the New Yam accompanied by pouring of the drink offering or libations, prayers and dances and sexual orgies and prostitution.

FESTIVALS AND PROSTITUTION

Also we find that during other traditional heathenic festivals such as Christmas, Easter, the “*nwaotam* festival” performed during the new year (worship of the two-faced god, Janus) and the “*ekpe* festival”, communal eating, drinking, feasting and sexual orgies and prostitution are common place. We can then appreciate what the scriptures mean when such phrases as “eating in the mountains” are used in the prophets:

Ezekiel 18:6

“And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman,”

Ezekiel 18:11

“And that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife,”

Ezekiel 22:9

“In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness.”

This matter of “eating in the mountains” speaks of the happenings in the “high places of Baal/Ashtaroth worship” which was usually located upon the mountains or in groves, e.g. Mt. Peor was the mountain in Moab where the high place of Baal-peor was located. Here, Baal was worshipped with sexual immorality including wife

swapping and other unclean sexual practices among the Moabites (Numb. 25), Here, as part of the worship of these idols, there was communal eating together in the sacramental feasts where food items dedicated to the idols were eaten and drinks taken after which sexual orgies were embarked upon. One of the major features of these sexual lewdness was to swap wives and also to consort with the readily available temple prostitutes or priestesses or whores. It is therefore easy for us to appreciate the carnal attraction and hold of this wantonness and licentiousness upon the people of Israel including the nobles, priests, prophets and kings. It was so bad that all the kings of the Northern Kingdom were taken in by this evil that was institutionalized by king Jeroboam, the son of Nebat “who made Israel to sin” for it was he who set up the famous high place of Baal in Bethel – Amos 7:10-13, 1 kings 12:25-33. This temple was furnished with a full complement of priests, temple prostitutes, sodomites, prophets of Baal and prophets of the groves etc. In the Southern Kingdom of Judah, all the kings were also overcome by these evil except a few “overcomers” such as Josiah and Hezekiah. Thus, it was that those kings that pulled down the high places were termed to have served God with a “right heart” while those that did not were termed to have “done evil” and to have walked in the evil ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin – 1 kings 15:11-12, 25-26. In some cases, some of the kings of Judah such as Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, brought the high place of Baal into the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, for which reason God rejected and judged Israel. 2 Chron. 33:1-15.

SEALING THE FIRST COVENANT

When the first covenant was to be sealed in the wilderness, Moses and the elders of Israel were required of God to come before him and they physically ate and drank of the sacrifices that they had offered up unto the LORD, the LORD GOD of Israel as we see in Exodus 24:8-11:

Verse 8

“And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.”

Verse 9

“Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel:”

Verse 10

“And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.”

Verse 11

“And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.”

In this fellowship and communion with God, the high points of this worship was that they saw God and did eat and drink before God. Thus, we see again that eating and drinking (feasting) is a cardinal feature of spiritual worship whether in the offerings of God or in honour of Baal.

MOSES AND JETHRO: THE PRIEST OF MIDIAN

Moses had been separated from his wife and two sons, ever since, he left them to answer the call of God at the vision of the burning bush, to lead the people of God out of Egypt. Here, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brings them back to Moses in the wilderness and it offered the opportunity for Jethro to meet Moses and his family (Parents) and the people of Israel. Thus, it was a time for getting to know one another, hence they asked after each others welfare (Exod. 18:7). It was therefore under this atmosphere of fellowship that Moses gathered Aaron and the seventy elders of Israel together to minister unto the LORD and to “eat bread before him” as shown in the following scriptures in Exodus 18:1-12:

Verse 1

“When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt;”

Verse 5

“And Jethro, Moses' father in law, came with his (Moses') sons (Gershom meaning, “I have been an alien in a foreign land” and Eliezer meaning “the God of my father, said he was mine help and delivered me from Pharaoh's sword”) and his wife (Zipporah) unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God:”

Verse 10

“And Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.”

Verse 11

“Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.”

Verse 12

“And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father in law before God.”

The scripture is very clear in stating that the people came together before God and they did eat bread under the embrace and warmth of God's presence. The bread was part of the sacrifices that had been offered to God, together with the burnt offering. Their physical eating of bread together before God was prophetic and symbolic and goes to show that eating together with in-laws and family members is a covenant such as what occurred in this case. When this happens in traditional marriage setting it can not be taken to be ordinary.

AARON AND HIS SONS

One of the regular acts of worship of Aaron and his sons, was that of “eating the holy things” in the Holy place of the tabernacle of Moses. We see an example of this in Lev. 6:14-18

[14] *“And this is the law of the meat offering: the sons of Aaron shall offer it before the Lord, before the altar.”*

[16] *“And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat: with unleavened bread shall it be eaten in the holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they shall eat it.”*

[18] *“All the males among the children of Aaron shall eat of it...”*

The males among the children of Aaron were the ones directed of the Lord to eat of this meat offering together with the unleavened bread. The meat offering (Lev. 2:1-16) speaks of the communion, fellowship and covenant relationship among the people of God and this spiritual bonding was demonstrated physically in “eating and drinking” of the meat (fellowship) offering by the priesthood. This is similar to the breaking of bread or the sharing of the communion of the body and blood of Jesus Christ through the eating of bread and drinking of wine in remembrance of the Lord’s death. 1 Cor. 11:23-30; Matt. 26:26; John 6:25:29.

SAMUEL AT THE HIGH PLACE

In 1 Samuel 9, we find a very interesting story involving Saul and the prophet Samuel. Here, the asses of Kish, a mighty man of substance and power, had just been lost and his son, Saul is sent after them. He wanders throughout the land of Benjamin looking for them and in despair decides to seek a word of direction from Samuel, the man of God:

1 Samuel 9:11

“And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here?”

Verse 12

“And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before you: make haste now, for he came to day to the city; for there is a sacrifice of the people to day in the high place:”

Verse 13

“As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about this time ye shall find him.”

A sacrifice of the people unto whatever deity that is being worshipped (either the Almighty God as in this story of Saul and Samuel or the devil, demons and idols, as is the case in traditional marriage) is not effected or accepted until the people partake (and subsequently submit in worship unto their God or idols/evil spirits) of the things sacrificed. Hence, we see that the people went up to the high place (a place of sacrifice) to eat for ‘eating and drinking’ were (and are) very vital aspects of worship. Hence, they would not even dare to eat of the things, until it was blessed (or dedicated to God) by the man of God.

EATING IN THE MOUNTAINS

It is therefore in the light of the foregoing, that we must then revisit the following statements made in the book of Ezekiel regarding eating in the mountains:

Ezekiel 18:5-6:

Verse 5

“But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right,”

Verse 6

“And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman,”

This scripture describes what takes place in the high places of Baal located usually upon the mountains. Here, the many activities of Baal worship include not only “eating things sacrificed to idols” but also sexual uncleanness such as adultery (wife swapping wherein one defiles his neighbour's wife, and also defiles himself by going near unto a menstrous woman) and in lifting up one's eyes to the idols of the Canaanites, Moabites and Ammonites which had been brought into Israel and had been legitimized and legalized by the kings and nobles.

The above scripture is confirmed by the following scripture: Ezek. 22:9-11:

Verse 9

“In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness.”

Verse 10

“In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution (menstrous woman).”

Verse 11

“And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister (incest), his father's daughter.”

EATING AND IMMORTALITY

Eating is such an important spiritual doorway and avenue or mode of worship that it is the pathway that gives man the potential of partaking of immortality. In the garden of Eden, the first Adam was commanded to partake of immortality. He was to do this by ‘eating’ of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. He was in a state of innocence then and had to make a choice for life and immortality or for death and separation from God: the source and fountain of life. He was deceived into choosing death and decay by the great deceiver. This choice was exercised by ‘eating’ of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Thus, we see that both at the physical and spiritual levels, eating is symbolic and is a recognized mode of worship and partaking of both spiritual and physical life. Jesus Christ according to 2Tim. 1:9-10 has come to bring life and immortality to us, we all have the opportunity of partaking of this immortality by “eating” of his flesh and “drinking” of his blood. This partaking of Christ comes when we receive, submit, digest and imbibe the gospel: the good news of Christ’s life that is available to all who would reject, lay down and put off the old nature of sin and carnality. This reception of the good news and of immortality is achieved both by the physical breaking of bread and wine of the holy communion (which is essentially symbolic) and the spiritual partaking of the bread of life that came down from heaven.

It then follows, that “eating and drinking” are recognized and well established avenues or doorway of fellowship with God or with evil spirits. Eve was simplistic about this matter. To her it may have been ordinary but to the devil, it was a way to get Adam and Eve and ultimately a doorway to getting man defiled and cast down from his exalted position of being the lord of the realms of the earth. The same is the position and danger of many in the Church today who are simplistic and careless about these grave symbolic matters. Let him who has an ear hear what the spirit of the LORD is definitely and expressly saying to the Church. Amen.

In summary therefore, we have seen that “eating things sacrificed to idols” is a cardinal pillar of Baal worship (which is associated with other forms of Baal worship such as sexual uncleanness and bowing down to idols) and that the traditional marriage feast/ceremony whether in primitive African tradition or in the civilized Western tradition, is a cardinal form of Baal worship. We shall now proceed to look at certain specific aspects of traditional marriage feast:

RITUALS OF TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

We have just gone through an in-depth study of the implications of the “eating of the things sacrificed to idols”, which is a crucial component of the traditional marriage ceremony. We shall now proceed to look at the other components of traditional marriage feast which are as follows: (a) Fertility rites and (b) Symbolisms of the sacred union/unity of the couple. Most of the information used in this section are culled from: (1) the new Encyclopaedia Britannica vol.7. 1st Edition. 1998. (2) Encyclopaedia Americana, International Edition. 1998.

FERTILITY RITES

A detailed study of scripture and Church history writings reveals that all the rituals associated with traditional marriage including fertility rites, originated or became highlighted from pagan Roman worship. One of the major issues that were addressed by the rituals had to do with fertility or fecundity (ability to reproduce young ones). These rituals that were associated with fertility were brought into the ceremony of traditional marriage with the objective of ensuring the continuity of the family, clan, tribe and kindred through the new couple. Thus, the basic thought about marriage in pagan Rome (and in our own society) is for the purpose of procreation, maintenance and extension of the family or tribal lineage. Among the Ibos, this concept is shown in the name: “Afamefula” or “Ahamefula” which means “let my name (heritage and lineage) not be lost or quenched”. The family system is viewed as the instrument through which the clan is sustained, hence, new families (and indeed the whole concept of family) are dedicated to the ruling spirits of the clan. Elaborate and intricate ceremonies and tokens and offerings have to be performed during the ceremony of marriage. It is hoped that these would attract the benevolence, favour and blessing of the ruling spirits upon the new couple.

It is not surprising therefore that the success or failure of the couple is based on whether they have been able to bring forth

children particularly male children. This is an ungodly principle because the Bible says very clearly according to Gen 2 and 3, that marriage is for:

- ❖ Fellowship (Adam was lonely and Eve was given to him, for fellowship and compassion).
- ❖ To overcome and to subdue and have dominion over the earth – Gen 1:26-28.
- ❖ To replenish the earth (including having children) Gen 1:26-28.

In God's programme, procreation is not the primary or major reason for marriage. Fellowship, overcoming and subduing, and having dominion over the earth weigh far more. Therefore, in our societies, a childless marriage is deemed to have failed but not so with God (None shall cast her young in Zion, is the word of the LORD).

Thus, the purpose of the usual traditional marriage in both Africa, Western Europe and America is for the marriage and new couple to be dedicated unto the spirit that rules over the family, tribe and clan. The reason for this dedication is for the spirits to accept the offering of the marriage so that it would be used to sustain the clan or tribe, so it does not go into extinction, so that its name or lineage or inheritance, is preserved. This is confirmed by the happening in Judges 21 where the backslidden people of Israel had to resort to the Canaanite tradition by counseling the men of Benjamin to engage themselves in “wife capture” so that “a tribe is this day not destroyed in Israel”, after they had vowed, in anger not to give their daughters in marriage to the Benjamites.

Thus, these fertility rites are usually symbolic and were carried out by the religious order or priests of the community, who would in this case be elders of the family, village and clan or by “Christian religious people” who are either ignorant about these matters or are outrightly rebellious. These fertility rites may take the form of a prominent display of cereal grains (e.g. Rice-confetti rice) or fruits or flowers. The rice may be sprinkled on the couple during the

wedding ceremony, or be sprinkled on their nuptial (marriage/honey moon) bed. It may also take the form of the couple being accompanied in their procession by a small child with a little bride. In some cultures, the prayer for the fertility of the union is symbolized by the breaking of an object or food item; to ensure a successful consummation of the marriage and an early childbirth. In all of these ceremonies, rice symbolizes fertility, even though in some communities, some other objects may be used in place of rice.

SYMBOLISM OF THE SACRED UNION

The sacred unity of the couple is again universally symbolized using various items. The object of these symbolisms is to invoke or proclaim the divine sanction of the ruling spirits or Baal of their wedding status. It may also be a sign that the new couple's dedication to the gods have been accepted. These rites include:

- Tying of the couple by chains, cords (nuptial knots), exchange of rings, pouring of water, joining of hand, and tying of garments. Sometimes, a threshold is made by tying a ceremonial cloth across it and the couple are required to cross it together or the groom is required to carry the bride over it.
- The eating together of the couple or by drinking wine together.
- **Wedding Cake**: the early marriage rite in ancient Rome involved a wedding cake called "confarreatio", made from the cake of wheat (farreus panis), which the couple first offered to the gods (ruling spirits), then ate together before sharing the same cake with the wedding guests/witnesses. The eating of the wedding cake dates back in time, in various communities such as Western Europe, where it consisted of small, unleavened biscuits, which were put in small containers and given to unmarried girls, who were

supposed to place them under their pillows to enable them dream of their future husbands. In ancient Greece, the cake was made of a mixture of sesame seed meal and honey (fruit cake). The eating of this cake symbolized the final act of nuptial rites and consummation of the marriage. Today in our society, the wedding cake culture has been refined and modernized but its symbolism and prophetic speaking remain unchanged.

- **The Tiara (crown)**: although the crown is symbolic of victory and reward, the wearing of the crown (of whatever sort) by the bride or the crowning of the bride is not only a mark of exaltation to a state of high honour but it is one of divine consecration to the gods. Hence, the wearing of the tiara by the bride symbolized a form of consecration or priesthood unto the estate of marriage, wherein the couple are set apart to function in procreation to sustain the family, clan or tribe. This picture is similar to the consecration of the Nazarite, who kept his hair, unshaven or unshorn, as a crown or sign of his consecration. Actually, the word translated nazarite is taken from the Hebrew word “Nezer”, seen in Numb 6:18 and speaks of one consecrated to God. Here, the hair is unshorn, as a symbol of this consecration. This is also similar to the mitre, worn by the High Priest of the Tabernacle of Moses (Exod. 29:6,39:30) in which, the crown or mitre signifies his separation and submission unto God. Also the Roman Pagan priests (including the Roman Catholic Priests) also wear a crown or a “tonsure” which is a circular hair style which is shaped like the sun as a mark of honour, submission and worship to the sun god whom they worship. Carnal man may look on this matter of wedding crown as fashion or innocent/ordinary but in the spirit it does emphatically speak of a consecration, initiation and dedication unto a priestly function, in the service and worship of the ruling spirits of that locality, to whom the

marriage has been dedicated. The tiara in this context, acknowledges this sovereignty and government of the ruling spirit. Thus, the wearing of a tiara by the bride, marks her out as a priestess and a consecrated one.

- **The Wedding Dress/Garment**: the ritual of the wedding dress, as the case of the other wedding rites, is laden with symbolic speakings. The simple ones and the free thinkers in the Church, would have us believe that it does not matter, that it is a matter of fashion and culture. But the scriptures emphatically point to the fact that the wedding dress is a covenant garment, which is worn for that occasion and is meant to speak to the occasion of the covenant of traditional marriage. The purpose of the garmenting was to present her as a “maiden” first to the ruling spirits and then to the groom. The wearing of the tiara/crown and the wedding gown (which was traditionally white and long-tailed/long-trained) brings together the picture of a “maiden”, being initiated or consecrated to the estate of procreation and of giving her husband sexual pleasures, just as the “temple maidens” also dressed traditionally in robes and crowned as priestesses function as temple whores/prostitutes to give the worshippers of Baal/Ashtaroth sexual pleasures during the offerings/acts of sacramental/ritual fornication or adultery (wife swapping).

The scriptures show that the bride or Christ is attired in a white garment (Matt 25, Rev 19) so also are the brides in the worship of Baal/Ashtaroth through traditional marriage to be attired in a special wedding garment. The traditional marriage ceremony is symbolic and serves as an initiation. It does not matter whether the participants are civilized or not, whether they look/appear innocent or not and whether they are spiritual or not.

The English wedding garment (no matter the fashion it assumes) is a priestly dressing of initiation in much the same way as the African or any other covenant garment worn in a traditional marriage ceremony either in a village setting or in a “Church” setting.

- **Wedding Procession/Wedding Feast:** the wedding procession has its origins in the betrothal and nuptial ceremonies of ancient cultures which did not fear God or know Christ. Here, the elaborate processions and revelries that accompanied the couple first to the wedding ceremony and later to their nuptial home, were all part of the worship and veneration of the sexual union of the couple. Fertility and sexuality were actually the objects of adoration here. This is weeping for Tammuz.

The wedding feast offered the occasion and platform for the performance of these fertility rites. It was also the place for the eating of the things sacrificed to idols. Every aspect of this feast was a form of worship and was patterned after the eating and feasting in the high places and mountains and groves of Baal/Ashtaroth worship. A good example is the feasting and elaborate process of the wedding of king Ahasuerus in the Book of Esther chapter 2.

ISAAC AND REBECCA: THE PATTERN

The scripture says that God will always leave himself a witness in the earth, thus we find that in the apostasy and rebellion of Israel in Ahab’s and Jezebel’s time, there were seven thousand that had not bowed their knees unto Baal, who were unknown to Elijah. In the same vein, we find that God has set forth a pattern how Christian marriage is to be contracted. This pattern is found in the story of Isaac and Rebecca in Gen. 24. This story is one that has a multidimensional application, while it addresses the love story of Isaac and Rebecca on the one hand, it also points to the purpose and plan of God Almighty (here typified by Abraham) to seek out

a bride (Rebecca) for his son (Isaac), through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Eleazer). Thus this story is perfectly suited to be a pattern of the righteous approach of God's people to the covenant of marriage:

The first principle put forth here is found in verse 3: "...that thou shall not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell:"

The reason for this injunction is found in Exod. 34:16 "And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods".

This scripture is addressing the principle that God's people are not permitted under any circumstance and situation to marry an unbeliever and to submit to the culture, tradition and customs of the Canaanites or the people of the world in choosing a wife. In fact, the Encyclopaedia Americana (1998) says that among the native cultures of the world, the payment of bride-price/dowry originated from the practice of wife capture. Here, among the few primitive cultures, a man captures a woman and keeps her to himself, sometimes by force, or he acquires her from a neighbour who may be weaker physically. This practice graduated overtime to wife purchase. This was a later development which was associated with the practice of slavery and ownership of property. These practices and origin of bride price clearly are not of God and we should not partake of these pagan cultures. The reason being that Christianity is a culture or life of its own. Many free thinkers and rebellious minds in the Church, even among the ministers, equate this Christian culture to the Jewish way of life. This is a very dangerous position which is essentially carnal.

Abraham recognized the reality of this separation, based on his own experience of being caused by the Lord to separate from his own family, kindred and culture, unto a new way of life. The vision was clear and vivid before him. Hence, he warned Eleazer

thus, even as the Lord God is NOW warning and counseling the ministers of God not to cause, deceive and encourage God's people (the bride) to mingle with the Canaanites or the world. This is shown in the next verse: verse 4 "*But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.*" When we submit to the Holy Spirit, He will take a wife from our country (Believers) and from our kindred (Brethren).

ONE WEDDING

God was the one that instituted marriage, thus, the authority of the Church supercedes that of both the family and community and this is NOT negotiable, as far as God Almighty is concerned. It is high time for the Church to awake from its slumber of abdicating its God given responsibility in marriage. The practice has always been that of submitting the marriage of the Christian couple first to the tradition of the land (after trying to purge it of its supposedly unclean or evil aspects) before bringing it to the Church for final blessing and approval. This is a wrong order, according to the scriptures in that, the scriptures set forth the pattern that there should be only ONE WEDDING. This is the joining that should be done by the Church, instead of having two or more weddings viz: Traditional wedding, Church (white wedding) and Court wedding.

It is necessary here to clarify the issue of the court/registry marriage. This is statutory. An ordinance of the powers that be, the government of the land which are recognized as "ministers of God" (Rom 3:1-4; Titus 3:1). We are therefore to "give to Caesar what is Caesar's". Thus, believers who submit to this rule, are at liberty to do so based on the authority of the scriptures for there is no defilement therein. However such believers should note that they still require to undergo the real thing: the blessing of their union by the fellowship of the brethren in the ONE TRUE marriage blessing. In this context therefore, there is only ONE WEDDING. If they consummate their union before the blessing of the Church, it amounts to fornication and rebellion, which thing is

as idolatry and witchcraft. They will heap defilement and God's wrath and judgement upon their union. Amen.

It is also necessary at this juncture to remind us that the traditional African wedding and the English/European white wedding are both traditional in nature and in spirit. This is to be differentiated from the Church wedding which is to be carried out according to God's own pattern. Thus, it is easily discernable therefore that marriages contracted contrary to God's order would face resistance from the devil being that it was foundationally and structurally flawed, right from the beginning of the union. Hence, God is causing this clarion call to go forth for he desires Christian homes that are free from the influences and defilements of the whoredom of traditional marriage for the spirit of whoredom has caused the heart of God's people to err (Hoea 4:12).

Therefore, the role of the family relations and community should be submitted to the authority and government of the Church, for the Lord is not raising a beggarly and weakly Church that cannot rise and stand against the usurpation of its role and powers by impostors-the family and community through its tradition, culture and custom... *"I will build my Church and the gates of hell (Traditional marriage/English white wedding) would not prevail against it"* - Matt. 16:18.

AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH

God is doing a new thing in the earth today. It is the new wine. We counsel you to submit your marriage to healing if you partook of the old wine of submitting to the doctrine of the tradition of the elders i.e. you went through both traditional marriage and English white wedding (even if you tried to purge it of leaven as much as you could). If you are about to get married, or praying to get married then you have an opportunity to overcome where others failed. Your overcoming would be the overcoming of the Church.

The family interaction and feasting should take place but these should not supercede the blessing of the union by the Church which MUST be uppermost and pre-eminent. This is shown in this love story by the following scriptures in Gen. 24:

Verse 33: *“And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, speak on”*

The business of contracting the marriage essentially has several dimensions: the family meeting, the blessing of the union by the Church, the blessings of the family and the feasting and the celebration. The aim and purpose of the family meeting is two-fold: to obtain the consent and the blessing of the family upon the couple especially their daughter (bride). The family meeting is meant to be a blessing and not a defilement. Thus, it is to be based on the principles and counsels of scripture. The word of God is to take pre-eminence and not the other way round. The traditions of the people should NOT supercede the scriptures at this crucial stage. The conduct of the family meeting should be conducted as the spirit of the LORD directs based on the light of God’s counsel regarding traditions and idolatry in the issue of traditional marriage. The following scriptures confirm this:

Verse 50: *“Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, the thing proceedeth from the Lord: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good.”*

Verse 51: *“Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master’s son’s wife, as the Lord hath spoken”.*

Verse 52: *“And it came to pass, that when Abraham’s servant heard their words, he worshiped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth”. Thus, we see that the family meeting was submitted to the will and counsel of God.*

The following scriptures give further insight into the order of God on how a Christian marriage should be contracted based on Genesis 24:

Verse 3: We should not desire a wife from among the people of the World.

Verse 4 and 7: Unto my country (Christians) and kindred (brethren). Why?

Verse 6: So that we might not go back again to the old country (old life of worldliness and ungodliness).

The servant (Eliezer) is a type of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 22: She was chosen first with the golden earring and the two hand bracelets – sign of sanctification and anointing to hear and work right before the bridegroom.

Verse 28: Rebekah spoke favourably of her experience to her family people.

Verses 32-49: Eliezer's story to Rebekah's family. He asked for consent (note verse 49).

Verses 50-51: Laban and Bethuel gave consent.

Verse 53: Gifts to her immediate family and Rebekah.

Verse 54: Celebration.

Verses 56-58: Consent of release.

Verses 60-61: They (family) blessed Rebekah.

When we apply these scriptures in the dimension of the prophetic speaking and realm of the Church, we see that Bethuel and Laban were playing the role of the witness of Christ within the body of Christ since Bethuel and Laban are Rebekah's brethren (two is the number that prophetically speaks of a witness) or the authority of

the body of Christ. They co-operated and yielded to the leading of the spirit ministering through Eleazer in giving out Rebekah (bride – the body of Christ) to Isaac, a type of the bridegroom (Christ the head of the body). Thus, here we see the agreement and Union of Christ the head (Isaac) and Christ the body (Rebekah) brought about by the ministry of the two witnesses (Bethuel and Laban) and the Holy Spirit.

This is a beautiful confirmation of the divine order of God in marriage: The Church of Christ takes the lead, the family submits and hands over the bride to the ministry within the Church through the instrumentality of the ceremony of Church blessing before many witnesses and the Church now hands over the bride to the bridegroom, thus bringing them together in holy matrimony, under God. This is the pattern and divine order.

JEWELS OF GOLD

The next step is outlined in the following scriptures:

“Verse 53” And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.

Here gifts are given joyfully and not demanded through covetousness, strife and contention. There is to be no talk of a list or dowry on behalf of any daughter of Zion. This is the divine order. Everyone got a gift and they were befitting for the occasion. The spirit of the Lord is able to vindicate us and honour us, if we would honour the Lord with out obedience and allegiance.

Verse 54: “*And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night and they rose up in the morning, and he said, send me a way unto my master.*”

Thereafter there was a feasting and interaction of both parties. This is how it should be “... *who so that findeth a wife, findeth a good thing and obtaineth favour of the Lord*” – Prov 18-22. It is not

surprising that the family joyously prophesied and blessed their daughter and sister:

Verse 60: “*And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.*” The usual happening is that most marriages done under the old order of Canaanitish culture end up in quarrelling, grudges, bitterness, strife and contention for various reasons, on the part of the various parties involved. But praise God, things are looking up and God is healing our land. He is bringing in a new order-the new wine that is bringing joy and deliverance to the redeemed of the lord.

FAMILY INTERFERENCE

The next line of action is that the family should hands off the marriage and step-down any further control and interference in the marriage when once they have given their blessing and handed the bride over to the Church. This is shown in the next few verses:

Verse 55: “*And her brother and her mother said, let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that he shall go*”.

This was a recipe for confusion and undue interference from the in-laws. Thank God that the Holy spirit would always bring a witness to the heart of God’s people to resist this desire to maintain the link and soul tie to the family. This undue affinity and affiliation to the family is the bane of the families of the people of God. Beware and follow the footsteps of Eleazer:

Verse 56 “*And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.*”

The Lord has severed this link and we should not allow any man to hinder us in this regard “... *therefore shall a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife and they twain shall be one flesh... and what God has joined together, let not man put asunder*” (Gen. 2:24).

Verse 58 “*And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, wilt thou go with this man? And she said I will go.*”

Verse 59 “*And they sent away Rebekah, their sister...*”

THE SIMPLICITY OF MARRIAGE

The final phase is the consummation of the union of the newly wedded couple. This is of God. In this whole process of marriage, Rebekah did not have to go through any elaborate programme of wearing special wedding dress etc. It was done in simplicity... “the simplicity and moderation that is in Christ” 2 Cor. 11:13.

Verse 64: “*And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel.*”

Verse 65: “*For she had said unto the servant, what man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, it is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself.*”

This speaks of the honour, purity and chastity of Christian women. There is to be righteous conduct between the couple during the period of courtship and engagement. The veil should only be taken off after the blessing of the Church. There is to be no petting, kissing, etc. whoredom, lewdness, fornication and uncleanness must not be allowed to bring defilement unto the relationship. “...when she saw Isaac she lighted off the camel”, it was love at first sight. This was because she had walked by faith in responding to the prompting and leading of the Holy Ghost in her heart both at the well and at home ... “I being in the way, the Lord led me to my master’s brethren”. There was the leading of the Lord for both parties and God is faithful to bring together couples in the body. It is the Lord’s doing that while we are on the way, doing the Lord’s business, giving our hearts to him, he shall direct Isaac and Rebekah to meet themselves and to be united in Holy wedlock:

Verse 67 “*And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife: and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.*”

Their union was one love and fellowship. This is the calling of the Christian home: a place of fellowship, love and comfort. May the

Lord restore our homes in righteousness, that we may be priests in our homes, fathers to our children, mothers to our children. May the Lord grant us grace to teach and bring up godly children who would not be fettered by customs, traditions and culture of the land but be used as battle axes in the hand of the Lord to destroy the altars of Baal in the land and to shepherd the nations as did Jacob. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE CEREMONY/FEAST

The hallmark of the Christian marriage feast is **simplicity**. The purpose of the Christian marriage feast is to join two consenting adults together in Holy matrimony, under the Headship of God, in the presence of the Church, family and witnesses. It is done under the covering of God just as the traditional marriage is done under the covering of the ruling spirits and Baal. It is symbolic just as its traditional counterpart is symbolic.

There is only one marriage to be done in the case of believers and that is the one done by the Church in the presence of the family and other witnesses. Since traditional marriage is Baal worship, it is to be discountenanced and **AVOIDED** by believers. It is not to be sanitized for we cannot heal Babylon (Jerem. 51:9). Any attempt to heal Babylon (traditional marriage) is deception and rebellion.

The Christian marriage ceremony then has the following components:

Approval: Isaac and Rebekah obtained the consent and approval of their respective families. This is advisable but not mandatory. It is a blessing and godly to obtain this consent and favour for he that *“findeth a wife findeth a good thing and obtaineth favour of the Lord”* (Prov. 18:22). It is also good to obtain a witness and confirmation about this union from amongst the brethren for in a multitude of counsel there is safety (Prov. 11:14) and every word is confirmed by the word of two or three witnesses (2 Cor. 13:1).

Blessing: There is the need to bless the union in God for every Christian home/marriage is the smallest unit of the body of Christ, whose head is the Christ of God. The blessing by the Church is the dedication or initiation of the Christian home/marriage unto God just as the traditional marriage is the initiation/dedication of the marriage unto the ruling spirits and Baal/Ashtaroth. This dedication is the most important/central element in Christian marriage and it is to be done by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (eldership) in the presence of witnesses in the Church: the brethren, family and friends.

This is not a social occasion but one of grave symbolic/prophetic implication. It is during this blessing that spiritual impartations, prophetic utterances and directions may be given by the LORD for this new unit of the Church. It is also a time when gifts and the callings of God may be stirred up in these brethren. Admittedly, it also offers an opportunity to break yokes and curses especially ancestral speakings and bondages. It is this joining that gives the young couple a solid foundation and impetus to begin their Christian home.

PREPARATION FOR THE CHURCH BLESSING

As we have seen above, the most important part of the Christian marriage is the Church blessing. The only requirement for the Church blessing is righteousness on the part of the couple.

Dressing: Simplicity and moderation is the rule. Simplicity means to avoid the sophistication of the world – costly apparel (1 Tim. 2:9), wastefulness etc. The due requirement in dressing is for both bride and groom to be neatly and simply dressed, reflecting the glory of God thereby. The traditional “wedding dress – the white garment” of the western civilization, is a priestly attire that would defile not only the couple but also offend the brethren and God. It is Best avoided: “*Touch not the unclean thing and I would receive you*” (2 Cor. 6:14-16).

Wedding Procession: This is a worldly contraption and does not serve any righteousness. It not only is unscriptural, but time wasting and expensive, requiring so much money and logistics of planning and consultation. Again, the rule here is **SIMPLICITY**.

All that is required of the brethren is for the couple to walk simply into the Church and take their positions or seats. Every other accompaniments would be as led and directed by the spirit of the LORD. The only rule here is simplicity and modesty.

Tokens of Love: It is Godly and Christian for the couple to bring forth a token of their love before the Church and the numerous witnesses. The exchange of vows is in order and is a public confession of their love and commitment to one another. Life and death are in the power of the tongue (Prov. 6:2), so this confession is life-giving and creative. It is reassuring and honours the commitment of their lives to each other. It is sealed and confirmed by the Heavenly Courts of God above. In the same token, the exchange of rings is a token of love, given out of love just as Christ is to give “a white stone with a new name” to each member of the overcoming bride of Christ (Rev. 2:17). The price of this ring is immaterial – whether cheap or expensive. The scripture says that Christ loved the Church and gave, so also the couple may exchange gifts including the wedding ring, to demonstrate their love for each other.

Marriage Feast: The only important thing here is to share fellowship in refreshing the witnesses and guests with food and drinks. All other accompaniments are extras. It does not have to be and should not be elaborate and expensive.

Is there really a need for a high place, master of ceremony etc? This aspect of the wedding ceremony is not a social gathering. It is still part of the fellowship of the laying on of hands of the presbytery of the covenant of marriage. It needs to be hallowed and

sanctified by simplicity. Worldliness and revelry would defile the atmosphere and presence of the LORD.

Gifts: The principle of giving shown in the scriptures, is that gifts should be given in secret (Matt. 6:14; Lk. 14:14) and God would reward openly. Any departure from this would be worldliness.

Bridal Dance: This is not scriptural and is of the world. It has its origin in whoredom and is not to be mentioned among believers. Amen.

Family Get-together: It is Godly for the families of the groom and bride to meet for fellowship and to know one another better. An example is Moses. In Exod 2:16-3:1, we see that Moses married Zipporah with the consent and blessing of Reuel (Jethro: the Godly priest of Midian). Moses stayed awhile with them and even had a son: Gershom. Thus, God blessed their fellowship and union. We also see another situation where Jethro visited after the marriage of Moses to his daughter, Zipporah, to support them in their time of stress in the wilderness (Exod. 18:1-12). At this family meeting, gifts should be given to family members voluntarily and willingly, and not according to any "list" or demands or emotional blackmail.

Marriage Consummation: There should be a specified period for the couple to consummate the marriage and to get to know each other intimately. This is to be encouraged, without parental or secular interruption. Deut. 24:5 says "*When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.*"

CHAPTER 10

MOLECH: CHILD DEDICATION AND SACRIFICE

MOLECH: CHILD DEDICATION AND SACRIFICE

The dedication of children after birth is a universal practice in all traditions and culture. In the pagan customs and traditions of the Canaanites, the child belongs to Baal for he is recognized as “the possessor, Lord or great owner or maker”. He is revered as the fertility deity or god and as such, he is recognized as the one who gives children and causes the couple to be fertile.

Thus, the whole idea of child dedication is to give back the offering to Baal: sometimes, the fruits and harvests of the land are also offered to Baal, as a mark of appreciation for his blessings upon the land e.g. the new yam festival is a classic example of this fertility ritual among the Ibos in which Amadioha/Ahijoku are worshipped.

There is an indirect or a watered down aspect of this belief: here, it is believed that the child belongs in reality to the clan primarily and that the parents are only custodians. Hence, the ruling spirits are the primary owners of the child. Thus, the child is therefore given back to the ruling spirits for guidance, protection and blessing, at birth.

Among the Canaanites, there was an extreme form of this worship in which the god Molech or Milcom was worshipped through child sacrifice. Here, the god Molech is carved with his hands outstretched (ready to receive the children), into which the children are hurled and the fire is kindled underneath this altar to consume the offering. This human sacrifice was considered as one of the highest forms of worship unto Baal and Molech. This offering is usually accompanied by drumbeats which muffle the cries of the babies so that the mothers would not feel the pain of this wickedness: their senses are dulled as it were by this machination

of the devil. In the backslidden state, Israel bowed to these practices, hence this offering usually took place at the great altar of Molech in the valley of Hinnom, and became an abomination and stumbling block to Israel as shown by the following scriptures:

Leviticus 18:21

“And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord.”

Leviticus 20:2-5

[2] *“Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones.”*

[3] *“And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name.”*

[4] *“And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not:”*

[5] *“Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people.”*

Here, the Lord calls this child sacrifice, whoredom and idolatry, which is capable of bringing a separation between man and his God.

Deut. 18:10

“There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,”

Verse 11

“Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.”

Verse 12

“For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee.”

We therefore see that the working of child dedication whereby the seed is made to pass through the fire is equated with the abominations of necromancy, witchcraft etc. Thus, it is the same spirit and working of sorcery that works this wickedness. This working was common place among the Canaanites, and it was usual for them to work this sorcery as shown in the following scriptures:

Deut. 18:9

“When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.”

Deut. 18:14

“For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.”

Jeremiah 7:30

“For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the Lord: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it.”

Verse 31

“And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.”

Verse 32

“Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place.”

MANASSEH

The following scriptures are more specific in telling us about this practice among God's people in Israel:

2 Kings 16:3

"But he (Ahaz, the son of Jotham king of Judah) walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel."

Verse 4

"And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree."

2 Kings 21:5-9

[5] *"And he (Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah) built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts (Holy place and the most Holy place) of the house of the Lord."*

[6] *"And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger."*

[9] *"But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel."*

2 Kings 23:10

"And he (Josiah, the grand child of Manasseh, king of Judah) defiled Tophet, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech."

The above scriptures detail the account of the practice of child sacrifice among the people of God, after the pattern of this abomination among the pagan Canaanite nations: child sacrifice was always associated with other forms of sorcery: enchantments, observing times (horoscope), witchcraft. This same pattern is what

we find in our modern civilization in which child sacrifice is still taking place: Among the satanic cults, child sacrifice is a high offering which is highly prized, for it entails the offering of human blood to the devil. Some serial killers and paedophiliacs (sexual abusers of children), target small children routinely.

There is also the multi-dollar business of child prostitution and pornography, not to talk of the “deep-pit” of abortion. These are all modern sophisticated forms of this valley of Hinnom or Tophet in our time. The issue of child prostitution and pornography has various shades and include the “harmless” forms of dressing: the “power-dressing” or “sensuous” or “chic” dressing for children where body-hugging and body-showing wears are being embraced by the children, the association with sorcery e.g. the Harry Porter books on witchcraft/magic and the “cult culture” that is now attacking children even in primary schools.

There is also the issue of forced child labour and child soldiers. Here, there are wicked spirits that have shaped modern politics and social relationship in such a way as to bring about this wickedness or manipulation and hardening of the emotions of innocent children for the selfish interests of their masters.

Among believers in our dispensation, there are certain manifestations of this practice of child sacrifice: it has to do with abortions, habitual abortions and childlessness (barrenness). In these situations, the devil begins to make a demand on the Christian couple (particularly where there are situations of covenants and ancestral linkages and openings) in which the woman aborts her children. This could become frequent or habitual in nature – serial aborting of children, sometimes in questionable or mysterious circumstances. The opposite of this scenario is where the devil puts up a resistance whereby barrenness is visited upon the couple for daring to become Christians or for not submitting their marriage to the ruling spirits through toeing of the traditions and cultures associated with marriage.

Let us now look at the various avenues and means through which this abomination of child sacrifice and dedication takes place:

Naming Ceremony: One of the major means through which children are dedicated to the ruling spirits and the devil is during the naming ceremony/rituals. Name means nature and is often tied to the circumstances of the birth or family dynamics of a child. In some communities, this ritual is formal as in the Yoruba traditions and culture – during the naming ceremony on the 8th day of birth. This observance is rigidly adhered to, even among Christians who happen to be of Yoruba extraction. In some other places, it is informal. However, the essence of the ritual is to give the child a name. In the natural, it looks innocent and needful but in the spirit, it is an initiation or dedication in which the child is given back to the ruling spirit of the clan for guidance and protection and blessing through out its earthly life. This is usually associated with offerings, prayers, feasting, incantations, libations etc. Among the Christians, some of the obviously objectionable ones such as libation etc may be expunged but the truth remains that it is Baal that receives the worship for this ritual is not of the LORD.

Laying on of Hands: Here, one of the traditional priests (in this context, may be an uncle or auntie, village/clan juju priest etc) performs the dedication. A dedication is made either through physical laying on of hands on the baby and then making certain incantations, prayers and “blessings” as part of the process of naming the child or of blessing the child. It might just be during a “harmless” visit by an elderly uncle or auntie etc, after the birth of the child. It may also be through an indirect or spiritual impartation or superimposition of a spiritual covering over the child. This may even be done through an utterance by someone in a position of authority over the child, even when they are not in direct physical contact with the baby.

Sometimes, an element of necromancy comes into play here, in which, through the practice whereby uncles, aunties and other

elderly family or village members call a child a particular name, indicating that the child is the reincarnated departed relation. Such names include *Nnenna* (mother of my father), *Nnenne* (mother of my mother) etc. In certain cases, these names are real official names of the people involved.

Bathing Rites: The other way through which this dedication is done is through the rituals associated with bathing or suppling the child at birth. Some of these include making prayers over the baby's navel or burying it specially instead of just disposing of it ordinarily when it falls off. In some cases, a tree is planted along side the navel or the tree is planted on its own on behalf of the child, to signify its life. Some people may even go to the extent of invoking the spirit of an animal upon the baby during this period, for purposes of blessing and protection.

CHRISTIAN CHILD DEDICATION

The scripture tells us clearly that the fruit of the womb (children) are an heritage from the Lord – Ps. 127:3. It is God who gives children and also the source of all life and blessings. Moreover, every offspring of believers is covered and redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Hence, at birth, every child of believers ought to be dedicated unto the LORD, for blessings and covering by the blood of Jesus. Even Jesus himself as a child was dedicated unto the LORD. It should be a time of prophetic utterances, prayers and blessings. It is also a time for breaking of yokes and family/ancestral covenants and soul ties. Here, the hands of the eldership or presbytery should be laid upon the child and the anointing of the LORD made to bear upon the child. It is also at this time that gifts and callings may be ministered unto the child. Parents also have a role to play here which is of great importance as they should in faith make prophetic proclamations and utterances regarding their child. This should not be viewed as a social affair, as is wont to be the case. This can be confirmed from the dedication of the LORD Jesus in which both Anna the

prophetess and Simeon made great prophetic utterances regarding the child Jesus and also about the Israel of God (Lk. 2:22-38).

It is also a time for the body of Christ to bring a covering upon the child through the exercise of the laying on of hands upon the child by the eldership or presbytery seeing that the eldership in this situation, ministers on behalf of Christ, the head (Christ Jesus) and also the body of Christ. Secondly, the agreement and unity within the body regarding this event also releases the door of the blessings of Zion upon the child as confirmed by Psalm 133.

Verse 1

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity (agreement)!”

Verse 2

“It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;”

Verse 3

“As the dew of Hermon (this was a perpetually snow-clad mountain top, which was one of the highest peaks of all the mountains around Jerusalem from which descended melting glaciers which watered and blessed the surrounding regions, including Jerusalem. It is actually the source of River Jordan and was called Sirion or Zion by the Zidonians – Deut. 3:9; 4:48), and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”

CHAPTER 11

THE PRIESTHOOD (REBELLION) OF FIRST DAUGHTERS

One of the ways in which God Almighty has manifested himself to his people, is that he is a God of measure and that he deals/relates with man on the basis of spiritual principles which remain constant. Hence, we understand the ways of God when we begin to appreciate and apply his principles in our lives. One of these principles has to do with Rebellion, and in particular, the spirit of rebellion that works in women especially first daughters.

Eve: Perhaps, this is the best example to use in illustrating this spirit of rebellion. The serpent had come to Eve, beguiling and subtle with deception and the end result was that she found herself, acting independent of her husband. This was the spirit of rebellion at work for the LORD God had saith of her: “I will make him a help meet for him” Gen 2:18. Her calling was to be a help meet, she was not to be independent or to usurp the position of Adam. Rebellion was the basis of her defilement and fall from glory. This sin of Eve has turned out to be the major stumbling block of women and the church (in a corporate sense) and it has metamorphosed into the state in which it has become intertwined with the spirit of whoredom such that wherever the spirit of rebellion manifests, the spirit of whoredom and lewdness also tag along with it. Here, in the case of Eve, the major spirit at work is that of rebellion but as we go through the account of scripture, we shall see how the spirit of whoredom and lewdness have become involved in the manifestation of this priesthood.

Daughters of Lot: As we go into the study of the scriptures, one of the things that strike you is the prominence given to certain figures, in this case, women. Usually, the names of women are not numbered in the genealogy of God’s people except for notable reasons. Hence, apart from Eve, we do not find many notable

woman until we come to the story of Lot, his wife and his two daughters. The setting of this story is befittingly Sodom and Gomorrah, two cities characterized by Rebellion, whoredom and lewdness. We see how the story ends with the daughters of Lot committing incest (sexual relations) with their father. This is a classic case of the principle of the first daughter, rebellion and whoredom at work. We may best understand and appreciate this iniquity by looking at three workings:

- ◆ The background of the daughters of Lot.
- ◆ The spirit behind this act of incest
- ◆ The effect/product of this iniquity.

SODOM: THE CITY OF WHOREDOM AND LEWDNESS

The background of the daughters of Lot was that they had grown up in Sodom. As we go through the scriptures, we see that they were obviously affected by this environment of sexual lewdness, a place where sex was idolized and given the prime honour. A city where pleasure was the prime objective of its inhabitants. Hear them in Genesis 19:5

“And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.” They wanted to have pleasure with these angels that came in unto Lot. An earlier scripture in verse 4 tells us the identity of these inhabitants of Sodom, desiring to have sex with angels:

Genesis 19:4

“But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:”

Hence, we are told that it was the men of the city that desired to sexually know and molest these angels, and they were both old and young and that they also came from every quarter of Sodom.

EVIL COMMUNICATION

Thus, we begin to get a glimpse into the environment of the daughters of Lot: they dwelt in Sodom, a city where sexual iniquity of all proportions (beginning from fornication, adultery, prostitution to sodomy and homosexuality), had taken over the whole population (less than 10 righteous people were found in this city – Gen 18:32). All the segments of the population – both old and young were involved. Thus, this culture of pleasure seeking and worshipping of sex was deeply embedded in this city. Also, we find that every quarter of Sodom was involved. Thus, the quarter of Sodom where Lot dwelt with his daughters was heavily populated by whoremongers, idolaters, sodomites and worshippers of Baal and Ashtaroth. Listen to God’s impression of these people – Genesis 18:20

“And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;”

The next scripture describes the experiences of Lot and his family in living with these abominable people, in seeing and hearing their vexatious deeds - 2 Peter 2:7-8

[7] *“And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked;*”

[8] *“(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)*”

This is further confirmed by Jude 1:7:

“Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange (other) flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

The filthy conversation of this city was filthy to such an extent that they were now demon-possessed of the spirit of whoredom, lewdness and fornication. In this orgy, one of their cardinal pastimes was going after strange (other) flesh which not only included having sex with people of same sex (homosexuality and

lesbianism) but also having sex with the “strange flesh” of people of the same parentage (brother, sister, cousins) or even with parents and angels. They were wild and maddened by sexuality, and Lot and his family were vexed by this riotous living day by day.

To make matters worse for the daughters of Lot, they were further brought under the yoke and covering of this wickedness by marrying husbands of the “men of the city”. They (their husbands) were so bonded and attached to Sodom that they made the fatal and ultimate choice of rejecting the mercy and deliverance of God, preferring rather to die and be destroyed with their kindred and childhood circle of friends of Sodom as shown in Gen 19:14:

“And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.”

Lot’s sons in law did not fear the LORD, instead they had a deep respect and attachment to Sodom which they could not exchange for anything else, even if it meant their deliverance and salvation. Thus, the daughters of Lot were besieged by unbelief and uncleanness both without (from the men of the city) and within (from the mockery and scoffing spirit of their Sodom-loving and sympathetic husbands).

WHOREDOM AND INCEST

One can safely conclude based on the above account about the filthy lifestyle and culture of Sodom, that it was one of Rebellion against God’s order about sexual relationships, whoredom and uncleanness. This brings us into the next aspect of the working of the priesthood of the first daughter among the daughters of Lot. The spirit that we see working in them is not only that of rebellion and independent course of action, (just as was the situation in the case of Eve) but we also discern the additional working of the

spirit of whoredom, lewdness and uncleanness. This can be confirmed from the scriptures in Gen 19:30-38:

Verse 31

“And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth:”

Verse 32

“Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.”

In the above scripture, we see many principles at work. Firstly, we see the principle of the “first daughter” at work in which the firstborn daughter of Lot was the one who took it upon herself, (out of her own volition), to act and deemed it absolutely necessary to preserve “seed of their father”. This was rebellion at work. Secondly, we see the principle of whoredom and lewdness also coming into play here as we easily see and discern the mind set of this daughter of Lot. Her mind set was that of the environment of her formative years: Sodom. The lewdness and uncleanness of this city was still fresh in her mind such that her major preoccupation was sexual pleasure and the need to preserve seed of her father: “There is not a man in the earth to come in unto us”. This speaks of a lusting after sexual pleasure. It was so strong and insatiable and violent in her that she resorted to violence (a spirit of violence came over her) and she decided to make her father drink wine so that she would satisfy her lusting or desire to go after strange (her father’s) flesh: “come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him”. As we read down this passage, we see the end result of this act:

Genesis 19:36

“Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.”

Thus, we see that the incest that took place here has been the product of the working of the twin spirits of rebellion and whoredom. It is therefore clear that the working or manifestation

of the priesthood of the first daughter is based on these two strong spirits: rebellion and whoredom.

MOAB AND AMMON

Perhaps, the great importance of the working of the priesthood or principle of the first daughter is best illustrated by the product or outcome of this manifestation in the lives of the daughters of Lot. This is because the Bible calls Lot a righteous man (2Peter 2:8), meaning that this working is something that is contemporary with the people of God, it is something that is real and practical in our culture and everyday situation and relationships.

The outcome of the incestuous relationship of the daughters of Lot with their father, brought forth Moab and Ammon, according to Gen 19:37-38:

Verse 37

“And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day.”

Verse 38

“And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.”

We shall now proceed to probe further the meaning of the names (or the natures) of these two sons of these women:

Moab: The literal meaning of this name is “one brought forth from mother’s father’s flesh” – it could also mean “the seed or progeny of the father”. This name of “Moab” speaks of various dimensions of natures, coverings and spirits that point to the ancestry, heritage, and the roots and lineage of this man. Therefore, the scriptures have given us insight into these various workings through the various stories, prophecies and experiences of Moab as recorded in the Bible. Let us now take a look at some of these manifestations that point to the deep foundational workings of the priesthood of the first daughter:

The Spirit of Whoredom: Here, we see that this spirit of whoredom which operated in the mother of Moab (Lot's first daughter) has now been multiplied in its operations also in the daughters of Moab as shown in Numbers 25:1:

“And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.”

Here, the spirit of whoredom is transmitted down the ancestry of Lot's first daughter to the daughters of Moab – her grand and great grand daughters (children). As this iniquity is passed down the lineage, it becomes stronger and varied in its application and manifestation e.g. the Moabites worshipped Baal-peor in Mount Peor with whoredom and sexual uncleanness of the wildest proportions in which every deviant form of sexual behaviour and pleasure was practiced including sodomy and bestiality. Thus, they not only brought forth the nature of the city of Sodom (their root), they actually surpassed its wickedness. This is also shown by the fact that the whoredom of the daughters of Moab now was linked with idolatry –

Numbers 25:2

“And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.”

Verse 3

“And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.”

Thus, we see this iniquity spreading. It now involves not only the daughters of Moab but also the people of God are now roped in and defiled, causing them to incur God's wrath thereby.

In our own contemporary culture, the first daughters are required by tradition not to marry, but to stay put in the parents house and to have children through whoredoms. Even when they marry, the working of this priesthood is such that they basically experience unstable and unhappy marital relationships, with some ending up

in divorce, thus paving way for them to return back to the parents house to continue a life of whoredoms.

For those who become Christians, the general experience is one of oppressions, difficulties, experiences with the “Husband Spirit”, long delay in getting married, difficulty with having children and delay in having children. The cardinal point herein is a life of agony that may lead to the shipwreck of the faith of the weary and unstable soul and it is this working of agony, misery and unhappiness that gives life and suck to the devil. Hence, the kingdom of darkness does everything possible to sustain this priesthood.

UNCLEAN LOINS

This is perhaps, one of the greatest impediment and consequence of this priesthood. It is noteworthy that the principle of the first daughter may also work and manifest in someone who is not a first daughter e.g. Eve was not a first daughter per se, but we see an aspect of this working in her life especially in the area of rebellion. The same is the case of Jezebel (of whom we are not explicitly told in the scriptures that she was a first daughter) who clearly and classically manifested the priesthood of the first daughter in many dimensions which we shall deal with later.

The loins speak of the reproductive function of man both physically and spiritually e.g. the loins of the mind spoken of in 1 Peter 1:13. The purity of the loin is the bedrock and foundation of the priesthood unto Christ, as shown by Aaron and his sons in Exodus 38, who had to wear white linen breeches as the first level of their clothing. Here, in the case of Moab, due to his unclean ancestry and birth, God made a pronouncement that forbade him or his descendants from entering unto the congregation of the LORD, not to talk of having an opportunity to minister unto the LORD as a priest. Herein lies the predicament of most believers generally and first daughters in this particular situation and circumstance. The following scriptures tell us about this working:

Deut. 23:2-6:

[2] “A *bastard* (a person whose parents are not married to each other or a person who is not pure or genuine) *shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord*”.

[3] “An Ammonite or Moabite *shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever:*”

[4] “*Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.*”

The basic working that we can see here has to do with the restrictive influence of this principle in those who have been defiled by the “unclean loins of Moab”, that runs in the ancestry of one who is initiated (by spirits, tradition or circumstances) to carry or exercise this priesthood. Moab, was a bastard, brought forth by incest and thereby having his loins defiled. This disqualified him from standing before the congregation of the LORD in ministry unto God. This is the same hindrance and resistance that has been befalling God’s people who find themselves being resisted in their desire to walk right and to live clean, holy, consecrated lives. Here, unclean thoughts, inordinate affection and evil desires (lusts) have had the upper hand in the lives of the people of God due to this burden and yoke.

Praise be unto our God that there is a way out of this bondage (1 Cor. 10:13) as shown in the life of Ruth, who though being a Moabite (Ruth 1:4), was eventually married to Boaz (Ruth 4:10) and became the great grand mother of Jesus Christ. She broke through this barrier and her feat speaks of a Church and a people that are arising in these last days to break the curse and bondage of the uncleanness of the loins, that has had a restrictive influence over God’s people (in general and first daughters in particular),

working to hinder them from appearing before God in Zion (Psalm 84:7).

The Chamber of Tobiah: The name Tobiah means “Jehovah is good” and was the name of an Ammonite, who was allied with Sanballat (the Horonite), who was an enemy of the people of God, Neh. 2:10. But Tobiah had a problem; his ancestry was that of incest and whoredom through the working of the priesthood of the first daughter, which operated in his great grand mother (the second daughter of Lot) even though she was not a first daughter. There may have been an attempt to cover this evil and unclean ancestry, hence we see him bearing a good name “Jehovah is good”, but this was not sufficient to cleanse his roots. He was even called “the servant” and being religious and crafty, he gained friendship with the high priest, Eliashib (Neh. 3:1, 3:4). He was given one of the most important chambers in the house of the LORD even though he worked tirelessly to frustrate the attempts of God’s people to rebuild the fallen walls of Jerusalem (Neh 4:7-8, 6:1-4)

The following scriptures give more insight into this chamber that was allocated to Tobiah: Neh. 13:1-13

[3] *“Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law (“That the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God forever” – verse 1b), that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.”* This “mixed multitude” included the Ammonites and Moabites who had mingled their seed amongst the children of Israel through marriage. Thus, their ancestry and roots were hidden deep down in their flesh, personality and culture. Some including Tobiah may not have been aware of the priesthood or principle that was working in their hearts, as a result of their ancestry. This is similar to the position of God’s people today who are largely ignorant of the ancestral cords that the devil is pulling in our hearts. May the LORD be merciful unto his people at this time, that we may receive cleansing of our loins and may this cleansing work an inward grace into us that would enable us to be

established within the house of our God. O may we be grounded as pillars in the sanctuary of Jehovah. Amen.

Neh. 13:4

“And before this, Eliashib the priest, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, was allied unto Tobiah:”

Verse 5

“And he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests.”

CHAMBERS OF THE SOUL

Taking a look at the use of this great chamber in the house of the LORD, it is quite clear that it was very, very important. It is not only surprisingly but instructive that this was the chamber that Tobiah was allocated to and by his occupation, he caused the house of the LORD to be forsaken (verse 11) and it was also accounted by Nehemiah to be a great evil (verse 7). This event speaks prophetically to the working within our own souls wherein the devil has implanted his nature, demons and spirits deep within the various great chambers within our souls (according to Ezekiel chapters 40-44, there are several chambers in the spiritual temple which he saw in the spirit which speaks or is a type or picture of the temple of the human being. Also, John 14:1-3 speaks of the many dwelling places (chambers) in the house of the LORD – “My fathers house”. Jesus also said “*The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head*” - Matt 8:20. **The holes and nests are the same as the chambers in the soul, that are presently being occupied by spirits: represented Ammonites and Moabites and Canaanites.** The process of this implantation has taken several generations so much so that many are ignorant and unaware of this evil more especially where religiosity and goodness has covered the evil personality of our flesh or the veils of our flesh.

Neh. 13:7

“And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God.”

Verse 8

“And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber.”

JUBILEE

Blessed be God that there is enough grace in Christ to search out all the “secrets of Edom (the flesh) – Obadiah 3-6. Here, all the belongings of Tobiah were cast out just as God is right Now releasing a ministry that is moving into the depths or chambers of the soul natures of the Church in general to search out and to cast out or destroy all the works of the enemy. In a more particular sense, this is the sound of Jubilee to all who have been bound by the principle of the first daughter. It is high time to awake out of slumber, for our land shall not be sold forever. Lev. 25:23.

The word of the LORD that is NOW coming to the Church at this hour is focusing on the cleansing and deliverance of these great inner chambers within our souls. For saith He “I will put my laws in your inward parts, in your mind will I write them” – Heb. 10:16-17. Thus, the time of the externals is over and God is now marking his people in their foreheads (inward places). This is the burden of the new testament which Jesus Christ enacted through his precious blood.

Neh. 13:9

“Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense.”

Nehemiah in this context, speaks of a type of the redemptive ministry of Christ in the last days which is directed to the chambers of our souls, with the sole purpose of cleansing these chambers of

all its Tobiahs and illegal occupiers. This redemptive ministry is similar to the Elisha or “double anointing” ministry that came in the place of Elijah, to complete the foundational work of the Elijah ministry in cleansing the land of idols and idolaters and the Jezebels and Ahabs of Israel. This ministry is a two-fold one: on one hand, it is a cleansing ministry. The cleansing is one that has to do with the personality and the flesh. It is similar to the cleansing of the soul that occurs on the day of atonement (part of the feast of tabernacles) in which every soul is required to afflict himself. The other aspect of this ministry is the restoration of true worship and fellowship through the bringing back of the meat offering, frankincense and vessels of the house of the LORD. This is the restoration of the glory of Christ to the Church, and it is similar to the budding of Aaron’s rod. This work of restoration is further confirmed in the next few verses:

Neh. 13:10

“And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field.”

Verse 11

“Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place.”

The effect of this occupation by Tobiah of the chambers of the house of God was that it brought a disorder and scattering to the move of God in the temple. Every priest “fled to his field” and the house of God was left desolate. Thank God for the “Nehemiah ministry” that is gathering and setting in order the true worship of Jehovah and fellowship in the Church – the body of Christ.

Neh. 13:12

“Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries.”

The time is now here when the LORD would be able to receive a true offering and worship that would spring out from deep within

the souls of the people of God as the LORD begins to restore Zion and to cause us to see eye to eye. There is coming a feast of joy and rejoicing to Zion as the LORD causes the time of refreshing to break upon his people. This is that long-awaited experience and partaking of the **feast of tabernacles** that was prophesied a long time ago (Deut 16:16, Lev 23, Num 28-29).

WHOSE GOD IS THEIR BELLY

The scriptures in Phil. 3:19 counsels us thus: “whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”

One of the major characteristics of Moab has to do with the belly and carnality. This is shown in the story of Eglon, the fat king of Moab and Ehud, the son of Gera in Judges 3:12-30:

Verse 12

“...And the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord.”

Verse 14

“So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.”

Here, we see Eglon, king of Moab, reigning over the people of God for eighteen years. The number eighteen is prophetic being a three fold multiple of six (the number of a man, which speaks of carnality - Rev. 13:18). In the spirit therefore, this speaks of the reign of the flesh/carnality over the people of God. This principle of Moab being a type of the flesh and carnality is confirmed in several other places in the word of God:

Judges 3:29

“And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty (fat), and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man.”

In this scripture all the men were as fat as Eglon, suggesting a common nature and lifestyle of pampering of the flesh. Their flesh was their god that had to be satisfied with whoredoms.

Jeremiah 48:11

“Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees (dregs of wine), and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed”

The scripture here uses very strong adjectives to describe and unfold the depth and dimensions of the carnal fleshly nature of Moab which is operative in the priesthood of the first daughter. Moab is not only a fleshy, lusty man, (needing to be at ease), he is also a wine bibber who is settled on his lees and one who is ruled by his belly.

God’s response to Moab is shown by the nature and manner of the slaying of Eglon by Ehud:

Judges 3:21-22

“And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly.” [22] And the shaft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out.”

The strength of Eglon (and the Moabites) lay in their belly hence the dagger (sword of the spirit: the word of God) was directed at this vantage point. This is what God is doing at this hour as the response to the cry of his people that have been in captivity of Moab.

Deut. 2:9

“And the Lord said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot (Moab) for a possession.”

Lot was of the Flesh of Abraham, being his nephew, hence God’s counsel is that his people are not to inherit the flesh. Thus, we are not to partake of Moab and all of his fleshly speakings. The people

of God were therefore emboldened and strengthened to reject any inheritance that speaks of Moab for it is NOT one of the natures we are to inherit. It has not been given to us for an inheritance in God. Amen.

DOCTRINE OF BAALAM (DIVINATION AND WHOREDOM)

Divination is the working or ability to reveal hidden secrets or future events relating to an individual or a people by a priest of Baal (witch, wizard, magician, soothsayer, medium). The individual who carries out this priesthood is called a diviner such as Balaam. Thus, divination is a potent weapon in the devil's arsenal with which he seeks out the openings or weak points in the lives of the people of God. Thus, the scriptures speak of wizards (spirits) that "peep" and "mutter" Isaiah 8:19. As we shall soon come to see, this was the ministry to which Balak, the Divination-loving king of Moab, commissioned Balaam. He was to seek out by divination the weak points of Israel (peeping) and he was then to curse them or to cast a spell or evil influence over them through words and magical/priestly incantations made on the basis (strength) of blood sacrifices and offerings (muttering). The weak point of Israel was whoredom and this eventually became a stumbling block to Israel. Thus we are going to see how the principle of the working of the priesthood of the first daughter has been magnified and multiplied down the generations and ancestry to the point where it not only operated in Israel but now is at work in the Church: the body of Christ.

We are now going to go into the word of God to confirm what has been summarized above:

Balaam: Balaam (which means "Destroyer of the people") was a native of Babylon, just as Abraham. In fact, both Abraham and Balaam are of the same ancestry, being grand children of Shem, the father of Aram and Arphaxad. Aram was the direct progenitor of Balaam while Arphaxad was the direct progenitor of Abraham through Eber as shown in the following scriptures:

Deut. 23:4

“Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor (the Greek form of this word is “Bosor”, 2 Pet. 2:15, and means “a burning”) of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.”

Numbers 22:5

“He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me.”

Numbers 23:7

“...Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.”

Genesis 10:21

“Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born.”

Verse 22

“The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.”

Verse 23

“And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash.”

Verse 24

“And Arphaxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber (the name Hebrew was a derivative of the word Eber).”

1 Chron. 1:24-27

“Shem, Arphaxad, Shelah, [25] Eber, Peleg, Reu, [26] Serug, Nahor, Terah, [27] Abram; the same is Abraham.”

Acts 7:2

“...The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran,”

Verse 3

“And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.”

Based on the above scriptures, we can safely come to the following conclusions about the man Balaam:

- ◆ Nativity: Balaam was a native of the city of Pethor of Mesopotamia, in the land of Aram. Thus, Balaam was an Aramaen. Mesopotamia or Syria is the Greek name for Aram. In fact, the full Hebrew name is “Aram-haranaim” – the country between the two rivers of Euphrates and Tigris, which arise from the great mountains of the east (Num. 23:7). This area of Mesopotamia is now called Iraq. His nation was very distant from Moab.
- ◆ Abraham is also from Mesopotamia, from Ur of the Chaldees. In fact, Abraham’s father, Terah, is the seventh generation from Arphaxad, the brother of Aram, the great progenitor of the Aramaens which include the Syrians. Thus, both Balaam and Abraham had a common ancestry in the person of Shem. Thus, Balak, by the spirit, sought for one that was of the same “flesh” as Israel, to enable him gain insight into their weakness.
- ◆ Balaam by nativity was born into a land characterized by divination, magic, astrologers and wizards. The fact that Balak, the king of Moab which was a very great distance away heard of him, shows us that his fame was exceeding even unto distant lands.
- ◆ Balaam by nature (through his name meaning destroyer of the people) was called a destroyer of the people being someone brought forth by a father whose name of Beor meant “a

burning”. Thus, by his nature, he was positioned and suited to function as a tool in the hands of the devil.

Furthermore, we get a glimpse into the workings of this man by looking at the following characteristics of his ministry:

Familiar Spirit: Balaam had a very strong spirit of Divination/Enchantment:

Numbers 22:7

“And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand...”

Verse 41

“And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal (the temple of Baal where Divination and witchcraft and whoredoms are practised), that thence he might see the utmost part of the people.”

This “uttermost part” speaks of the “farthest edge or boundary of the people of Israel”. The vantage position of the high places, usually located on the top of the hills and mountains offered Balaam the influence of Baal. In the spirit, it is similar to the devil, taking Jesus Christ to the top of the mountain and showing him the kingdoms (hearts of men) of this world in a moment of time – Matt. 4.

Numbers 24:1

“And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.”

The other recorded time in which Balaam set his face to seek for enchantments and divination against Israel is shown in Num. 23:23 *“Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel.”*

False Visions: As part of the working of the spirit of divination in him, Balaam had the ability to see visions and trances that was quite characteristic:

Numbers 24:3-4

[3] *“And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:”*

[4] *“He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:”*

Blood Sacrifices: As it is usually the case with strong and powerful diviners, Balaam depended solely on the influence of familiar spirits that he conjured through the offerings he made on each case that he sought enchantments against Israel:

- ◆ **Kirjath-huzoth:** (Num 23 v 1-4) Here, Balaam built seven altars and offered seven oxen and seven rams.

- ◆ **Field of Zophim/Top of Pisgah:** (Num. 23:14) Here, they offered the same kind/number of offering. The top of Pisgah (which was one of the peaks of the Abarim Mountain ranges located in the land of Moab, the other notable peaks being Mount Nebo.) was very high and was the place Moses stood to view the land of promise.

- ◆ **The Top of Peor:** (Num. 23 v 28-29) Here also, the same kind of offerings were made. It was at this occasion (third) seeking for enchantment that Balaam made up his mind to stop, being that he had seen enough of the weakness of Israel that enabled him give the counsel of whoredom recorded in Num. 31:16 and Rev. 2:14 which made Israel to slay him in Num. 31:8 and Josh. 13:23. It is interesting to note that “Peor” means “opening” and this high place on the top of the Mountain called Peor seems to be where the Moabite Idol – Baal-Peor (lord of the opening) was worshipped. It was from this temple or high place that the final viewing of the weakness of Israel was made by Balaam. It was here that he concluded that sexual

uncleanness and whoredoms would be the weapon to use in casting a spell or covering upon Israel. An aspect of this curse or spell was the dispersion of some temple prostitutes from the high place of Mt. Peor into the camp of the children of Israel. The purpose was to entice them.

Dimensions of Divinations/Sorcery: In order to fully understand the working of the spirit of divination in Balaam (that was utilized by Balak to express the weakness of Israel such that they were able to cast a covering of whoredoms upon the people of God, which led to a severe plague among God's people wherein many souls (23,000) died in a matter of hours), we need to review what the scriptures say of the different aspects of divination: this will enable us to also appreciate the depth of the principle of the priesthood of the first daughter as manifested specifically in an individual and then generally in the Church (the bride of Christ), the reason being that the spirits that plague the individual woman (whether or not she is physically a first daughter) also afflicts the corporate woman : the bride of Christ:

Deut. 18:10-12:

[10] *“There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times (cloud-reader), or an enchanter (fortune teller), or a witch (spell caster),”*

[11] *“Or a charmer (of magic), or a consulter with (familiar) spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer (one inquiring of the dead). (Note: most of the words in brackets are as translated in the Interlinear Bible).”*

[12] *“For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee.”*

Balaam was therefore certainly an abomination unto God for he used these practices in his trade. Let us now proceed to examine some of these practices:

Magic: This is the practice involving scribes, writers, engravers or magi (wise ones). It involves the use of symbols, symbolic lines or writings to conjure demon spirits and evil forces to enable the magician influence the course of events or to cast a spell or covering (Dan 1:20, 2:2 ; Exod 7:11). The Hebrew word is “Chartom”^a.

Wise men^b (Hebrew: Chakham): This speaks of men of intellect, intelligent, philosophers, practicing magic and witchcraft.

Prognostication^c (Hebrew: Yadah): To acquire knowledge about the future or the unknown through the help of magical powers. In some cases, they sought to foretell the future through cloud-watching or star-gazing (Is. 47:13). This includes the practice of horoscope, the zodiac symbols etc.

Wizard^d (Hebrew: Yiddeoni): This is a root word that speaks of the sorcerer, magician, prophetic spirit, fortune teller and familiar spirit. It actually is derivative of 3404 (Strong’s concordance reference number) and also includes knowing one sexually – this is a form of witchcraft and includes rape and homosexuality. Initiation into the occult could be done through sexual knowledge (intercourse).

Soothsayer^e: (Greek: manteuomai): to divine, practice divination. The word is taken from “ mainomai or mantis” – a seer, a fortuneteller, to be mad or beside oneself, to make strange noises or to foam in the mouth while making terrible noises or incantations.

Enchanter^f (Hebrew: Nachash): To hiss or whisper, cast a magic spell or covering, to practise sorcery, to give oracle or take as an omen (1 kings 20:33), to divine or fortune-tell or prognosticate.

a. Strong’s Concordance reference Number: 247 (Hebrew: Old Testament)

b. Strong’s Concordance reference Number: 2450 (Hebrew: Old Testament).

c. Strong’s Concordance reference Number: 3045 (Hebrew: Old Testament)

d. Strong’s Concordance reference Number: 3149 (Hebrew: Old Testament)

e. Strong’s Concordance reference Number: 3132 (Greek: New Testament)

f. Strong’s Concordance reference Number: 5172 (Hebrew: Old Testament)

Witch (sorcery)^g – (Hebrew: Kashaph): whisperer of magic spell, using songs, muttering magical words. Also translated as sorcery. The ability to cast spells or send evil spirits or use powers of demons to influence or manipulate events such as music stars or in advertisement through the use of music or advert programmes.

Astrologer^h (Aramaic: Ashapph): This term includes sorcery, charmer, conjurer, magician, and enchanter.

Divinationⁱ (Hebrew: Qasam): This means to cut, divide, draw lots, divine sentence, oracle, evoke the dead, soothsaying, false prophet, attempt to learn the will of the gods or idols or Baal in order to manipulate or influence events or circumstances through the inspiration of evil spirits. To reveal hidden secrets or the future.

Charmer^j (Hebrew: Cheber): To unite, tie in a magical knot, spell.

Necromancy^k (Hebrew: Mutt): Worship, communing or enquiring of the dead.

Operations of Divination: Some of the ways in which divinations are carried out are cited below as recorded in scripture:

- ◆ Offering sacrifices on altars - Numb. 22-24
- ◆ Consulting with demons Josh -. 13:22, 1Cor 10:20.
- ◆ Conjuring the dead - 1Sam. 28:8-15.
- ◆ Divining with arrows/liver - Ezek. 21:21.
- ◆ Divining with stocks/trees - Jer.2:27, 10:8; Hosea. 4:12; Heb. 2:19.
- ◆ Peeping and muttering - Isaiah. 8:19
- ◆ False dreams/Visions - Jer.14:14; Ezek.13:6, 23.
- ◆ Recognize the Sovereignty of God (religious spirit) - Num. 22:18; James 2:19.
- ◆ Divining with Cup - Gen. 44:5.

g. Strong's Concordance reference Number: 3784 (Hebrew: Old Testament)

h. Strong's Concordance reference Number: 825/826 (Hebrew: Old Testament)

i. Strong's Concordance reference Number: 7081 (Hebrew: Old Testament)

j. Strong's Concordance reference Number: 2267 (Hebrew: Old Testament)

k. Strong's Concordance reference Number: 4191 (Hebrew: Old Testament)

Thus, we have seen the depths of the workings of divination in Balaam, how that he used divination and enchantments to beguile and cast a covering/spell of whoredoms over the children of Israel such that he counseled that whores (from the high places of Baal) of the daughters of Moab be sent unto the camps of Israel to seduce the men to commit whoredom in the high places of Baal and to eat things sacrificed to idols, as shown by the following scriptures.

Numbers 25:18

“For they vex you with their wives, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor's sake.”

Rev. 2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock (cast a spell) before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.”

Numb. 31:15-16:

Verse 15 *“And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive?”*

Verse 16 *“Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.”*

In this working of divination, Balaam had two principles that enabled him to cast a stumbling block (a spell) over Israel - he had a **familiar spirit** that granted him an access to view Israel and secondly, he had a **family connection** to Israel, for the king of Moab through the means of divination was required to seek out a sorcerer of the same flesh or one who was related to Israel. This is because this connection served as an opening that was critical in the working whereby Moab would be able to defile Israel and

cause her to be judged by the Almighty God. Thus, we see that Moab serves as the opening (Peor – means “opening”) through which the weakness of the Church (whoredom) is exposed and she is thereby attacked through the working of enchantments and the covering of whoredom in the matter of Baal-Peor and the doctrine of Balaam.

Rewards of Divination: In Numb. 22:7, we read “*And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak.*”

Balaam was only concerned with his belly hence he was interested in the rewards of divination. His gift of divination brought him much reward and he loved it so much that he discountenanced all the obstacles God put on his way in order to prevent him from cursing Israel. The next scripture also confirms this to us – 2 Peter 2:15:

“Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.”

Here, the scriptures state that he loved the wages of unrighteousness. He was in it for gain in much the same way that many “ministers”, “prophets”, “apostles” and a multitude of “pastors” are arising in the church, especially in the prosperity business in the church, for the sole purpose of gain and the rewards of ministry or “divination”. The belly is their god.

The other point is that Balaam was a bundle of contradiction. On one hand, it seemed that he had respect for God and declared only what God put in his mouth but the truth of the matter as testified by the prophetic vessels of the Lord (Peter and Jude), this “prophet was mad” (2 Peter 2:18) and set in his ways. Jude specifically speaks this: “*Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of*

Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.” Jude 1:11.

Balak: we shall now take some time to review what the scriptures say about this king of Moab. It will also help to shed more light on the workings of this priesthood of the first daughter and the spirits that are associated therewith: Numbers 22:5

“He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me.”

The vehemence of Moab is essentially aroused when the people of God decide to “come out of Egypt”. This oppressive effect begins to function when we get born again. It is this move of defiance and rebellion from being under the bondage of the devil that triggers off this counter action from the devil to cast a spell over God’s people.

Balak cried out “behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me.” The flesh does not want to be influenced by righteousness and always feels threatened when it finds itself under the searchlight of truth. Moab speaks of carnality and flesh (of the barest kind) and does not want to be under the influence of righteousness. “They abide over against me” says it all. The scripture (Matt. 10:36) says that a man’s enemies are them of his household (of his flesh). Here, we find Moab (Israel’s fleshly relatives through Lot) rising to the occasion and filling the posture of Israel’s bitter enemy (they would not let them pass through their territory peacefully and about 24,000 souls (Num.25:9) died in a matter of days due to the whoredom of Baal-peor). Thus, we see that here the principle of the priesthood of the first daughter has multiplied to affect not only first daughters but the whole church as we see in the case of the daughters of Lot (where it began to be

manifested) and now we see the whole of Israel being vexed by the matter of the whoredoms of Moab.

Curse me this people: We now come to the vital point in which Balak begins to emphasize that this battle is a spiritual one.

Numbers 22:6

“Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.”

This scripture brings out two important principles:

- **That the covering of God over his people is formidable.** Balak by divination had observed this in the spirit (he had “peeped” upon the people of God) and he “muttered” that they were indeed “too mighty for me”. O that the people of God would take this to heart. This is the beginning of our victory in Christ over our foes. The scriptures say *“Resist the devil and he will flee from you”* James 4:7. The devil will flee because we are too mighty for them to trample over. May the Lord grant you a personal revelation of your position and status in Christ and in the spirit. Amen and Amen.
- The other principle is that of cursing. Balaam knew again by divination that the only way he could overcome the people of God would have to be by spiritual means. He had to find a spiritual opening and this is the basis of the spiritual warfare that all believers are involved in. Let us then take a look at the word “**curse**”. There are essentially two Hebrew/Aramaic words which are translated as “curse”:
- Arar*. This means to curse, to resist, to bind, to cast a spell or covering, obstacles, restrict, condemn or to render powerless.

*Arar (Hebrew): Strong’s concordance reference number: 779.

- Qavav: muttering of magical words capable of undoing a target or to scoop out with words. This means to use **words** under the influence of the spirit of divination to attack an individual or a people **with the purpose of undoing them or to make them empty or desolate.**

COME DEFY ISRAEL

There is another word used by Balaam that highlights the intent of Balak, in Numbers 23:7 “...*Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.*” The word “defy”^{*} means to use words to punish or denounce a people or an individual, being that words are creative. Thus, when taken together we can summarize that the real intent of Balak was for Balaam, (being a sorcerer and one who had access to powerful familiar or wicked spirits and also one who had a familial or hereditary or fleshly linking to Israel), to cast a spell over Israel such that they would be weakened, diminished and obstacles would be placed on their way, to resist and bind them. What this spell actually meant was that wicked spirits were released upon Israel. Based on the previous scriptures, the major spirits released were those of whoredom, which were activated in the lives of the children of Israel when they made contact and submitted to the seductions and wiles of the temple prostitutes and daughters of Moab. In a matter of days, without any physical combat, 24,000 Isaelitish men lay dead as a result of God’s plague amongst them, as a punishment for their playing whoredom in the matter of Baal-peor. This is very serious business and should serve as an eye opener to the havoc that the enemy is wreaking in the lives of the people of God in our time who have also been put under a covering or a satanic spell as a result of the working of the principle of the priesthood of the first daughter.

Pagan altars/High Places: One of the established principles of this spiritual warfare against God’s people has to do with altars and high places. High places were essentially temples or buildings or groves that contained altars upon which offerings and sacrifices

^{*}Defy (Za’aph: Hebrew): Strong’s concordance reference number: 2197.

were made to Baal. Here, we see that all the moves of Balaam/Balak against Israel were carried out upon altars and in high places:

Numbers 22:41

“And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people.” The other instances are Num. 23:14; 23:29.

It is instructive that when it was time to curse Israel, the appropriate vantage point/position, was the high places of Baal. High places have different dimensions. In the physical, high places were places where Baal worship took place in which there were offerings, blood sacrifices, sacramental fornication and adultery, eating of things sacrificed to idols and human (child) sacrifice. These offerings were supervised by the priests of Baal, temple whores and sodomites and prophets of the groves. These abominations had such a stronghold in Israel that even the kings, prophets and nobles of Israel not only trooped to these places to worship Baal, but they actually erected them in the temple of the LORD (2 kings 23:1-27).

However, in our own contemporary situation, these high places are not only physical, but they are now spiritual and actually exist in the hearts of men. **The heart of man is the altar upon which offerings and worship is given to either the LORD God Almighty or unto the devil.** Hence, Rev. 4,5 and Ezek. 1 all speak of the fact that God’s altar or throne is within the soul (heart) of man (Rev. 2:17; Lk. 17:20-21). Thus, we see that Balak built new altars in the high place for Balaam to use in consulting the familiar spirits in the process of cursing Israel: Num. 23 :1: *“And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams.”* New altars were built for this purpose and speaks of the working of the devil whereby he is always seeking to build new altars upon which he can stand (as a basis) of casting a covering over God’s people. Even when we repent of our trespasses and sins, he goes about seeking to build new altars. Thus

our strategy of defeating the enemy is to be watchful and to ensure that all altars in our hearts are destroyed just as Josiah destroyed all the altars and high places in Israel (2 kings 23) and to ensure that no new ones are erected in their place.

BLOOD COVENANT :- RATIFYING THE COVENANT

This is the other principle that works with the erecting of altars. It has to do with blood covenants:

Num. 23:2

“And Balak did as Balaam had spoken, and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram.” These are blood sacrifices and speak of the offerings of life unto the devil and the enacting of blood covenants with the devil. By the nature of the priesthood of the first daughter, there is an ancestral covenant based on blood that lies at the foundation of the altar in the heart. This covenant needs to be ratified or activated for it to come alive. This is done each time an offering is made on the new altars that the enemy causes us to build through contacts and defilement that we experience in our daily interactions with the world and its people. The contact needed may be as simple as “eating and drinking” or attending a family/village-gathering etc. There is no need to draw up a list of rules and regulations for if we walk in the spirit, the spirit of the LORD would point out to us what the demands of the devil are in each circumstance. It may be a fit of anger or a surge of lustful desire or pornography etc. A very good example is the blood covenant that is made or ratified during **female circumcision**. Here, the bloodshed is actually an offering that is made to the ruling spirit in which the female (child or adult) is dedicated, offered up to baal and brought under the covering of darkness.

The principle being that “blood was offered on the new altars”: within the high places of Baal which were already existing. This high place is the principle of the priesthood of the first daughter and the new altars are the situations and actions we take from within our hearts which give life or suck to the enemy. This is all

the enemy needs to have the covenant ratified and for him to continue to execute the “curse” upon God’s people. One of the strengths of this working is the craving in the heart to bring this offering and this is exemplified by the craving or lustful desires and emotions that strengthens this offerings such as the story of the strange woman and the “simple one” or “a young man void of understanding” as shown in Prov. 7:4-27.

Jezebel: The story of Jezebel in the scriptures begins on an interesting note as the background of this woman is revealed:

1 kings 16:30 *“And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him.”*

Verse 31 *And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel (meaning “chaste or unmarried”) the daughter of Ethbaal (meaning “with baal”) king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him”.*

[32] *And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.*

[33] *And Ahab made a grove, and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.”*

The summary of the reign of Ahab, as the king over Israel, is that he did evil above all the kings that were before him and then the scripture goes ahead to state that the reason for this was due to the influence of Jezebel over him: Before he married Jezebel, his major testimony before God was that “he was evil and walked in the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that made Israel to sin.” After he married Jezebel, (under her influence), he added two additional evils: (a) he built a house for Baal and reared up an altar therein (b) Ahab made a grove or Asherah or Asherah’s pillar, which was actually a wooden pole representing the male sexual organ, the phallus. Here, Asherah or Ashtaroth was worshipped by the indulgence of the worshippers in sexual orgy, lewdness,

pleasure, passions, wantonness and licentiousness. Asherah was the abomination of the Zidonians, the native tribe of Jezebel - 1kings 11:5).

Thus, the picture that the scripture is painting is simple and direct: Although Jezebel is not explicitly said to be a first daughter of Ethbaal, it is crystal clear that she operated under the principle of the priesthood of the first daughter. This is shown by the fact that when she married Ahab, she foisted or brought upon Ahab (and ultimately upon Israel, the people of God) the culture, tradition, worship and abominations of her people (the Zidonians: who were great worshippers of Baal and Ashtaroth – 1 kings 11:5 says “*For Solomon went after Ashtaroth the goddess of the Zidonians*” Verse 8 “*And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods*”). Thus, we see that Ahab who already was evil and had a soft spot for idol worship in his heart, was easily influenced to submit to the culture and traditions of the Zidonians.

Jezebel did not actually leave her father’s house, where she was a prophetess and a priestess (her name means unmarried or chaste or one who is married to Baal alone and has no real allegiance to any man). This is shown by the fact that she maintained the link with the goings on in her father’s house through the establishment of the same abominable practices in her husband’s house in Israel. She was determined to not only preserve the culture of her kindred but to also propagate it. Under the influence of the kindred or familiar spirit, she caused the king to support her in causing a multitude of priests of Baal and Ashtaroth to be sponsored and sustained by state money:

1 kings 18:19 “*Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the grove four hundred, which eat at Jezebel’s table.*” There were four hundred and fifty (450) prophets of Baal and four hundred (400) prophets of the groves of Astaroth (these were temple prostitutes/whores) making a total of eight

hundred and fifty (850) idolatrous priests that were being sustained by Jezebel while she persecuted the true prophets of the LORD.

Clearly, she succeeded in transporting and transposing the culture of her people upon Israel and her word was law. Thank God for Elijah that stood up for God and slew all these horde of darkness in one blow. It is an encouragement to the Elijahs of God that God is raising this hour to rise against the working of the mammy water spirit (which is our local name for the same spirit which the Zidonians worshipped under the name of Ashtoreth). Thus, Samaria became a city of idolatry due largely to the influence of Jezebel.

Usurping Spirit: the second aspect of the manifestation of the principle of the priesthood of the first daughter in Jezebel has to do with the usurping spirit. The Bible does not leave any one in doubt as to the fact that Jezebel ruled her husband and usurped his position as king: 1 kings 21:1-16:

Verse 7 *“And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.”*

Verse 8 *“So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth.”*

Here, the scriptures cast Jezebel in the image of one that on her own took decisions on her husband’s behalf even when the husband was involved in the matter. She took four actions that amounted to the usurpation of her husband’s position:

- She said “I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite”.
- She wrote letters in Ahab’s (the king’s) name.
- She sealed the letters with Ahab’s (the king’s) seal.
- She sent the letters to the elders and nobles of the city of Jezreel.

Thus, she acted in the place of the king and usurped both his position and privileges, to the full. And Ahab did not (and could not, and indeed dared not) oppose her (verse 16), this is the same usurping spirit that came to Eve and caused her to usurp her husband's position. The same can be said of the daughters of Lot who usurped the position and authority of their father in the matter of preserving the family lineage.

The effect of this action or this usurping spirit in causing Jezebel to exercise governmental prerogatives was that of blood shed, human sacrifice and the resultant judgment of God. The issue of blood shed and human sacrifice is interesting because the Zidonians just like other Canaanitish peoples such as the Amorites and Moabites were well accustomed to human sacrifice. A classic example of this form of offering to baal (which was actually what Jezebel had in mind: she purposed to dispose of Naboth as just another human sacrifice) is shown by the sacrifice of the Moabite king called Meshah in -

2 king 3: 1-27

Verse 4 *“And Meshah king of Moab was a sheepmaster...”*

Verse 26 *“And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him...”*

Verse 27 *“Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to their own land.”*

Thus, we see that yielding to the usurping spirit in this context speaks of a dimension of the manifestation of the principle of the priesthood of the first daughter in which one comes to the place of bringing an offering unto Baal which has its foundations in blood shed and human sacrifice dating as far back in ancestry as Jezebel, Moab and the daughters of Lot.

Witchcraft: In the various dimensions and depths of witchcraft as shown in the word of God, this evil working essentially involves the ability of an individual to influence the course or outcome of events, actions of men and the manner of relationships amongst people, with the assistance or inspiration of evil forces, demons and familial spirits. Thus, witchcraft involves a working of the mind especially whereby the heart of the one practicing witchcraft (either knowingly or unknowingly) becomes the altar upon which incantations, prayers, chanting, offerings, are made to enlist the working of these satanic forces in bringing a covering or casting a spell over an individual, people or a place/locality or house. The intention being to influence, manipulate, control and rule or dominate or exercise governmental prerogatives in the lives of the victims or target.

In this regard, the scriptures state clearly that Jezebel practiced witchcraft – upon her husband, the elders and nobles of Israel, the sons of Belial and over individuals such as Naboth: 1 kings 21: 9-10:

Verse 9 “*And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high (set him up) among the people.*”

Verse 10 “*And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear (false) witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.*”

Here the two sons of Belial and the elders were used and manipulated in the process of shedding innocent blood. The other scriptures about the operation of witchcraft in Jezebel:

2 kings 9:22 “*And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?”*

1 kings 21:25 *“But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.”*

This scripture here says that the witchcrafts of Jezebel included that which she wrought upon her husband in that she stirred, incited or manipulated him for her selfish ends. In some ways, she wanted her husband to fit into a mould of personality, she set her mind to achieve this and she succeeded. This incitement and manipulation was so powerful that it caused Ahab to sell his soul to the devil such that his heart became an altar and an offering unto Baal at the same time.

Jezebel: The Prophetess: The spirit of Jezebel is a spirit that is at work in the church today. In the physical, Jezebel’s ministry in Samaria was that she seduced Israel with her whoredoms and witchcrafts to serve Baal and to worship him. This work of seduction began with Ahab, her husband, whom she incited and stirred to sell himself to work evil and wickedness in Israel. Next, she moved on the ministry of the prophets and caused them to be slain:

1kings 18:4 *“For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.”*

When she saw that the coast was clear for her to implement her next agenda: to institute the worship of Baal and Ashtaroth throughout all Israel (which essentially meant that they would engage themselves in committing sacramental/ritual fornication and adultery in the groves that housed the temple prostitutes, and the eating of things sacrificed to idols in the pagan temples, high places and groves), she recruited a horde of the sons of Belial as prophets of Baal and prophets of the groves. These were more than the eight hundred and fifty (850) which Elijah slew for the

remainder were the ones that Jehu slew in his campaign to destroy Baal worship in Israel – 2 kings 10:18-28.

Thus, Jezebel with the assistance of these cabal of idolatrous priests, seduced and incited the people to give themselves over to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols. When it became clear to her that Elijah, a true prophet of the LORD was going to cut her short, she sent a messenger (both physically and spiritually) to Elijah, threatening to offer him as a human sacrifice to her gods (1 kings 19:2).

In the spirit and in the Israel of God today, we also find this spirit of Jezebel at work, and the scriptures put it forth thus: Rev. 2:20 *“Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.”* The word translated “seduce” is the Greek word “planao”*, which means to roam or to wonder, go astray from the truth, to forsake the right path. Therefore, the working of this spirit is to cause the people of God to go into apostasia (to depart from the truth). This is the spirit that is working in the church today to bring about the atmosphere and condition of apostasy as was the case in the Israel of old. The Ahabs of the church today (the so called leaders, teachers, pastors, bishops etc) have been incited by Jezebel to lead the people of God astray. The mainstream of the church today has gone into apostasia, idolatry, spiritual fornication, whoredoms, eating things sacrificed to idols (traditional marriage) and have turned its back on the LORD that made them.

The scriptures in 2 Thess. 2:1-3 says:

Verse 3 *“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”*

*Planao: (Greek, Strong’s concordance reference number: 4105).

Thus this seduction is associated with “a falling away” of the church from the truth of Christ. In a latter verse (24), the word of God links this working of the spirit of Jezebel to “the depths of Satan”. Hence, when we look at the church today, one can see the “children” of this spirit/woman (whom the LORD promised to kill with death): whoredom, witchcraft, seduction, teachings from the depths of Satan such as prosperity, return/back to sender etc and eating of things sacrificed to idols especially traditional marriage: both western and African types.

We can then see that the spirit of Jezebel is the manifestation of the principle of the priesthood of the first daughter either in a first daughter, in an individual or in the church at large, wherein there is a connection made between the heart of the individual and “the depths of Satan”. Some of the major strongholds besetting the believers today are traceable to this spirit: Rebellion in the home between husband and wife, besetting sins of whoredoms (lusts, fornication, adultery, pornography, masturbation, wantonness etc), eating things sacrificed to idols (traditional marriage), childlessness etc.

The prayer in the heart of God’s chosen ones in this hour is that the LORD would raise an Elijah ministry in the land today that would confront this Jezebel/mammy water spirit of our time. There is an urgent need to “wake up the mighty men” from slumber. It is Now time to begin to address this spirit directly and there is an assurance from God that “*I will kill her children with death.*” It is time to begin to bind the activities of this spirit in the hearts of God’s people: “... *and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto everyone of you according to your works*” – Rev. 2:23.

ATHALIAH: JEZEBEL’S DAUGHTER

All the evil associated with Jezebel, are multiplied in the activities and priesthood of her “first” daughter: Athaliah (meaning: she who has been afflicted by Jehovah) as shown by the scriptures:

2 Chron. 21:4 “Now when Jehoram (the son of Jehoshaphat) was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren (verse 2 – six brothers) with the sword, and divers also of the princes of Israel.”

Verse 6 “And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab (the daughter of Jezebel) to wife: and he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD.”

2 Chron 22:2-5

verse 2 “Forty and two years old was Ahaziah(the son of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat) when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother’s name also was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri.”

Omri was the father of Ahab and thus the grand father of Athaliah. In ancient/Biblical times, it was common for grand fathers or grand mothers to be referred to as the father or mother of the grand child e.g. in 2 Chron. 17:3, king David is called King Jehoshaphat’s father.

Verse 3 “He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab for his mother (Athaliah) was his counselor to do wickedly.”

Verse 4 “Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD like the house of Ahab: For they were his counselors after the death of his father to his destruction.”

The above scriptures show the following features about the activities of Athaliah:

- Athaliah like her mother Jezebel, never really did leave or cut the links with her father’s house. Thus, she transported and transposed the idolatrous and evil ways of the house of Ahab upon Judah. In fact, she was given in marriage to Jehoram as a symbol of the covenant or friendship or unholy alliance between Ahab and Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 18: 1-34) which was rebuked by the LORD – 2 Chron. 19: 1-3.

- Athaliah like her mother Jezebel, exercised an evil influence and control over her husband (Jehoram) and eventually over her son Ahaziah. The scriptures say that she was his counselor and some of the fruits of this counsel is illustrated thus: “*Jehoram ... slew all his brethren with the sword, and divers also of the princes of Judah*” (2 Chron. 21:4).

Moreover he (Jehoram: Athaliah’s husband) made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication (sacramental/ritual) and compelled Judah thereto.” (2 Chron. 21:11)

Thus, we see her influencing and advising her husband to do evil and to offend God deeply:

- Athaliah like her mother Jezebel was strongly involved with whoredoms and sorcery. In fact, it was during her association with Judah through her marriage to Johoram that Ashtaroth/Baal worship in the mountains of Judah was revived and strengthened.
- Athaliah even surpassed her mother Jezebel in usurping kingly authority in that she not only usurped the husband’s position but actually ruled Judah following the death of her son, Ahaziah (2 Chron. 22:10-12) “... *And Athaliah reigned over the land*”. This was rebellion par excellence and shows the full force of the priesthood of the first daughter at work here.
- Athaliah was evil and bloody like her mother Jezebel in that she shed blood herself and also surpassed Jezebel being that whereas Jezebel caused Naboth to be stoned to death, Athaliah killed all the seed royal as recorded in verse 10 of 2 Chron. 22.
- Finally, Athaliah was judged by the priesthood led by Jehoiada, which speaks of the priesthood that God is raising in the land today who are arising in the strength and name of the Lord to

judge this twin spirits of Jezebel and Athaliah that is usurping the position of Christ in the heart of God's people at this hour (2 Chron. 23:1-15).

CHAPTER 12

NECROMANCY AND BURIAL RITES

In the culture, tradition and customs of the pagan peoples of the world, death and the dead are both venerated and worshipped. There is a very thin line between honouring the dead (give honour to whom honour is due – Rom. 13:7) and worshipping the dead. The ideal attitude of believers to the dead is captured by the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in Lk. 9:60 “*Jesus said unto him, let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.*” The above scripture tells us clearly that it is only “the dead” that are preoccupied with worshipping the dead for those that die in the context of Christ are only “asleep”, hence Jesus says that Lazarus is asleep – John 11:11b

“Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.”

Verse 13 “Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death but they thought that he had spoken of taking rest in sleep.”

Verse 14 “Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.”

In the same vein, believers that loose relatives and loved ones who are not saved are not to worship the dead but should mourn them and let go – let the dead bury the dead. We are not to get embroiled, entangled and overwhelmed with the rites of passage or burial for most of these rituals constitute the worship of both the dead and death itself. Believers are to celebrate life and not death for Jesus is “the resurrection and the life” hence he that has Jesus has both the resurrection and the life meaning that he has overcome death. Death is beneath him and he has overcome death as shown below:

John 11:25 “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”

Verse 26 “*And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believeth thou this?*”

VICTORY OVER SIN AND DEATH

We see therefore that in Christ, Christians have overcome both physical death (separation from the physical world) and spiritual death (separation from God’s presence and fellowship/communion with God). He who is born of the spirit and washed in his precious blood has passed from death to life, from darkness into light, from the kingdom of Satan and his spirits and demons of death into the kingdom of his dear son – JESUS CHRIST. He that is born of God is placed in God, above death, all principalities and powers and every potentate of darkness and dark counsels. Thus, every believer has indwelling in him the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which begins to work to break the ordinances of death (physical and spiritual) within him. Hence, Jesus says that he that believeth, shall never die (if he were dead, yet shall he live, and if he liveth, then he shall never die). Therefore, in Christ, there are two classes of men who have received the resurrection and the life: those who are asleep in Christ and those who are alive in Christ. Both are quickened (and being quickened) in Christ. Thus, **when the day of Christ is fully come**, just as when the day of pentecost was fully come, there shall be a revelation of these jewels in God and they shall shine forth as the stars, every man showing forth his own dimension of the glory and life of Christ that has been worked into him for saith he “one star different from another star in glory.” So is the resurrection (2 Cor. 15). Every vessel (soul) in him, he fills to the extent that that particular soul has opened up to Christ or has emptied itself of its own personality or flesh. This working enables him to truly be him that filleth all things (vessels or souls) with his fullness. This is also the resurrection and the life.

The time is coming and even Now is when death shall be swallowed up in victory. A time when mortal men would receive immortality (Jesus Christ has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel: 2Tim. 1:9-10) in this life and upon this earth.

A time when men would rebuke death thus: “*O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy power?*” (1 Cor. 15). This is because man in Christ would have overcome sin. Hence, the prophet says “There was no more sea” or “death” in that new Jerusalem which is coming down, out of heaven, into the souls of men (Rev. 21) for the kingdom or dominion or rule of God is within men (Lk. 17:21) and his tabernacle or dwelling place is now setup amongst or within (the souls) of men. This is then that Zion which the LORD God speaking through David prophesied would come to be, as recorded in Psalm 132:13-14 “*...For I have chosen Zion (the 144,000 or the full manifestation or infilling of Christ within every soul in him, to the fullest dimension on earth, among men) as my dwelling place forever, here will I dwell for I have desired/purposed it.*”

In the light of the above, Christians are called to celebrate life hence the scripture says “let the dead bury (worship, reverence) the dead (death and the dead)”. We are not to be part of this order of life. This is the new rule or dispensation that the LORD God is bringing upon his church at this hour. May we heed the sound of the trumpet and the alarm of war being brought forth by his prophets and apostles in these last days.

Necromancy: We shall now take a close look at what the scripture teach about the working of necromancy and those that practice this evil art: necromancers: Deut. 18:9-14

Verse 9 “*When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.*” This scripture here is addressing the culture of the land as being abominable.

Verse 10 “*There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire....*”

Verse 11 “*Or a charmer ... or a necromancer.*”

“Necromancy” is one of the abominable aspects of the culture and traditions of the land which we are to rebuke, repent and turn away

from. A necromancer therefore is one who practices or uses necromancy. The word “necromancy” is translated from two Hebrew words:

- “Darash”^a: this means to enquire, consult, seek or worship the dead or death itself.
- “Muth”^b: to die, kill or loose one’s life.

Thus, necromancy or the art of worshipping or consulting or seeking after the dead, spirits of the dead or spirit of death, actually has two dimensions: physical or spiritual. These two aspects would be further highlighted as we go into the scriptures: 1 Sam. 28:1-25: Verse 6 *“And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.”*

Verse 7 *“Then said Saul unto his servants, seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.”*

Verse 8b *“...And he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee.”*

In these scriptures, we get an insight into this craft of conjuring the dead. The woman of Endor was a sorcerer, witch or diviner who had a spirit of divination or a conjuring spirit which enabled her to “channel” or call up ghosts or spirits from the abyss or shoel (hell). Hear her “I saw gods (or spirits) ascending out of the earth” – verse 13. Thus, she functioned as a medium who contacted evil spirits (familiar) in order to divine or foretell future events. In this case, Saul was concerned about knowing the outcome of his impending battle with the Philistines.

a: Darash (Hebrew, Strong’s concordance reference number: 1875).

b: Muth (Hebrew, Strong’s concordance reference number: 4191).

THE WORKING OF NECROMANCY

We see therefore that the very important element of necromancy and the working of this craftiness are the sacrifices, offering, enchantings, incantations made in order to conjure or call up these familiar spirits which would then bring forth a divination about a matter. Sometimes, if not most times, these familiar spirits put on a religious garb (as happened in this case when it manifested in such a way as to suggest it was Samuel actually speaking the word of the LORD to Saul when in actual fact, it was a familiar spirit that had taken on the form or appearance of Samuel in order to deceive Saul and the witch of Endor that it was Samuel they were interacting with) in order to work deception among men.

In this regard is the working of reincarnation which is hard-core necromancy and sorcery. The scripture says that it is appointed unto man once to die and judgment follows thereafter – Heb 9:27. Thus, the familiar spirit in order to work its usual deception, makes a mark on the baby within the womb similar to the one the parents, relations or necromancers have made on the person who is supposed to have reincarnated. This is possible seeing that the devil has a god-allowed ministry or ability to influence physical events or circumstances or even the body of an individual as shown in the case of Job and also by Jesus who said “*Fear not him who can only hurt the body but fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell.*” Lk. 12:5, Mt. 10:28.

We therefore see that an important weapon which we have with which to come against this workings of necromancy is to bind the ability of these mediums, sorcerers and witches and wizards to conjure familiar spirits or their ability to commission them to manipulate or influence or effect desired goals or to cast a spell upon men particularly believers who have refused to bow or submit to their dictates. A very common scenario is the affliction suffered by first daughters or couples who defied parental counsel in getting married or people who have desecrated ancestral covenants and priesthoods. Also there is a popular sorcerer/spirit

operating in the Niger Delta and South Eastern area of Nigeria whom we need to bind that its ability to conjure or divine with familiar spirits be cut short and judged accordingly. Amen.

NECROMANCY IN OUR LOCAL EXPERIENCE

Again, the working of the priesthood of the first daughters or “*Umuadas*” in Igbo culture and tradition (also present in other cultures) which function to enforce the traditions of the fathers is actually necromancy. This is because they stand to enforce the words, counsels and wishes of departed elders and ancients of the family and community and derive their awesome power and wickedness in their ability to conjure up the spirits of these dead ones. In actual fact, they call up familiar spirits who now afflict those who run contrary to their counsel. Based on the foregoing, the keeping of the traditions, customs and ways of the forefathers are actually aspects of necromancy and the custodians of these customs – the chiefs and elders, the age-grades/clubs and juju priests and sorcerers/wizards, rely on the working of the familiar spirits in bringing and wreaking wickedness, to manipulate men into bowing/submitting to the vain culture of the land. This is confirmed by the fact that during such occasions, libations or drink offerings and prayers and other forms of appeasement are given to these departed ones as a way of conjuring them and bringing on their influence and involvement in the affairs of the community. This is pure hard-core necromancy.

Another common aspect of necromancy in the culture and tradition of our land has to do with masquerades. In certain communities, masquerades are referred to as “*mmanwu*” or “*ndimmuo*” or “*itimmuo*” meaning spirits. Some of these masquerades are reputed to have originated from burial grounds or the water/river/sea. The dance steps or drumbeats are only performed by initiates who learn them from people who interacted originally with spirits from the water etc. Some cannot be seen by women or children while some are said to be spirits visiting the earth etc. There are a few of them which can only be played seasonally after elaborate offerings,

sacrifices and appeasements. The use of masquerades, images (masks) as forms of culture and art decorations are civilized versions of necromancy. Christians are not to meddle, defile or entangle themselves in such practices – the scripture says we are not to touch the dead or the world for we would be defiled thereby - 1 John 2:14-15, Lev. 21 & 22.

BAAL-ZEBUB

The next scripture that gives us further insight into the working of necromancy is found in 2 kings 1:2

“And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron (philistine city) whether I shall recover of this disease.”

This is a classic case of necromancy by one anointed of God but who had backslidden in his relationship with God. Ahaziah was the son of Jezebel through Ahab. Obviously, he had an idolatrous background and walked in vanity by inquiring of Baal-zebub. The name Baal-zebub means literally “lord of flies” but as we look into the scriptures, it also means prince of the devils:

Matt 12:24

“But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beel-zebub (Baal-zebub) the prince of the devils.”

They were actually implying and vilifying Jesus as one who was involved in necromancy. They meant that he was conjuring up Baal-zebub and utilizing its demonic power in healing the one with the deaf and dumb spirit.

Thus, Ahaziah consulted with evil spirits and required divination regarding his health and the outcome of his disease. Baal-zebub, the prince of devils, is no one else but Satan, the devil himself. Thus, Satan worship has been of old and was introduced into Israel

by such sorcerers as Jezebel, the mother of Ahaziah. In much the same way, there abound today many who worship Satan, which include the cult of the Saturnalians and other phallic worshippers.

FEAR OF DEATH

An important aspect of this worship of death, the dead and Satan is through the fear of death. Fear hath torment and is the chief instrument of the devil to torment believers. The scripture says in Heb. 2:15

“And deliver them who through the fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

The snare of the fear of death has been the avenue through which many of God’s people have given suck continually to the devil. Many have gone like Ahaziah to the devil, cap in hand, begging and inquiring of him, to spare their lives. This is an abomination and a misnomer. This scenario has to change for we are to rebuke this fear and repent from this priesthood. Our lives are hid in Christ in God and our times are in his hands for He not only took captivity (including the devil) captive, He made a public shew of the devil and his princes triumphing over them in it (Col. 2:15), He actually is the one who holds the key of hell and heaven (Rev. 1:18) and is the only one that determines our future – with long life shall He satisfy us, if (very important) we obey and serve him from our hearts in spirit and truth – Ps. 91.

The fear of death is a prince among the princes of the devil which manifests to the church as high wickedness and functions through certain instruments and means which include: disease, cancer, fear, violence, sorcery, witchcraft, the thoughts and words (curses) of man. Fear of death is an enemy the church, and in particular the first fruits company, must take on and overcome. Hear what the scripture says, *“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death”* (1 Cor. 15:26).

God is in this last hour, raising an army that would take on death and the fear of death. The scripture says in Rev12:7-10:

Verse 7 *“And there was war in heaven (the heaven of our soul: mind, will, emotion and desire, where both Christ and Satan are contending for supremacy), Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon (Satan) fought and his angels,*

Verse 8 *“And prevailed not; neither was their place found anymore in heaven.”*

Verse 9 *“And the great dragon (Satan, prince of the devils) was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him.”*

Verse 10 *“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven (our soul realm) Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”*

This power that these overcomers received is actually an authority, permission, allowance and freedom from the corruptive and defiling influence of the devil in the heavens of our soul. This is the hour of his deliverance for his people – for all who would rise and face the enemy (resist the devil and he would flee from you, says the testimony of brother James in his epistle to the church (James 11:7). It is time to stop running from the devil for the LORD has raised (and is still recruiting) his elite end time army that would rise out of the ashes, grip and strong hold of death, disease, carnality, traditions etc. Just as in Ezek. 37 where the valley of dry bones was the foundation of the mighty army that God is raising up. He is raising a body and not individual stars like Saul.

BURIAL RITES

In the experience of the people of God throughout all ages (both in the past and now), death is one of the strongholds that the church is

yet to fully overcome. Here, we have to distinguish between mourning for the dead and the actual worship of death and worship of the dead. In the case of the worship of death, as has been mentioned previously, over time the devil has succeeded in establishing this worship in various forms and dimensions. Here, death is revered and appeased. For example, in various cultures, there is the tradition of bearing names that variously deify death such as occurs among the Ibos with such names as: “*Onwubiko*” (Death please have mercy), “*Onwughara*” (Death please spare me) and “*Onwudike*” (Death is all powerful and mighty). This is ungodly seeing that in Christ we have overcome death hence Christ says “Let the dead bury the dead.”

Among the Canaanites, an established tradition was the worship of Molech through human sacrifice particularly children (passing through the fire) and fertility (sexual) rites. Included in this practice is the burying of prominent people with several human heads. This is still much of a common practice in our communities. Also included here (in a sense) is the issue of reincarnation and human cloning by Baal worshippers such as the Raelian cult which has championed the crusade of human cloning where they hope to achieve immortality through cloning.

Worship of the Dead: Again, overtime there has been the development of an intricate web of rites and practices which constitute the worship of the dead. Some of these practices include keeping a vigil for the dead, second burial ceremonies/rites (which includes the “christianized” version of “memorial service”), making marks/cuttings in the body of the dead, the observance of “Dead-march-in-Soul”, speaking/talking to/with the dead, the requirements for a widow to sit beside the dead body of her husband etc. There are many scriptures that address these issues:

Lev. 19:27 “*Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of the beard.*”

[28] Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD.”

Lev. 21:1 “*And the LORD said unto Moses, speak unto the priests (All believers under the New Testament/covenant of Christ are priests unto the LORD), the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, there shall none be defiled for the dead among his people.*”

Verse 4 “*But he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself.*”

[5] “*They shall not make baldness upon their head (shaving of the head as a sign of mourning), neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make cuttings in their flesh.*”

Jeremiah 48:1 “*Against Moab thus saith the LORD*” This was God’s judgment against Moab:

Verse 37 “*For every head shall be bald, and every beard clipped: upon all the hands shall be cuttings and upon the loins sackcloth (or loincloth wrapper).*”

Here, the Moabites, a heathen and pagan people are shown in a mourning mood because of the dead among them who have been slain of the LORD. Their manner of mourning is typically that of worshipping the dead: cuttings in the flesh, beard etc. Then we see them doing something that is quite familiar with us here in Africa. The tying of “loin cloth” to worship and bury the dead. In some of our riverine communities, it is unthinkable and unacceptable for anyone to attempt to bury the dead without wearing the “loin cloth”. In some cases, all males are required to wear it even in normal circumstances. Among the Egyptians, the dead were buried with so much fanfare in so much that for their kings (pharaohs) they made an elaborate tomb containing food items and other supplies needed for the life beyond. The bodies were mummified and preserved to last for a long time. Their images and statues were also made and in some cases, great tombstones were erected such as the great pyramids of Egypt at Giza which have become a

great tourist attraction. This is clear necromancy and worship of death and of the dead.

GODLY MOURNING

The scriptures teach that we should mourn with those that mourn and to weep with those that weep (Rom. 12:15), Ecclesiastes 3:1-4 says there is a time to be born and a time to die. In Genesis 23:2 we see Abraham mourning for his wife Sarah:

“And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba, the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.”

Abraham only mourned and wept for Sarah, he did not take her back to his nativity of Ur of the Chaldees, to bury her there. He buried her where he was currently residing among the children of Heth for he sought a piece of land from them for this purpose. Seeing we are of the seed of Abraham, we ought to follow this example and not to get entangled in worldly affairs. Although there are no rules or regulations as such regarding Christian burial, the hallmark is **simplicity and moderation** (Phil. 4:5). We are to keep clear of any defiling traditions or rites of burial that worship the dead or that reverence death. We trust that the heart that desires to do the will of God and to glorify and honour the LORD, would be inspired and directed accordingly by the LORD God Almighty.

In the case of Moses, the scriptures give an account of his death, burial and mourning by the children of Israel as seen in Deut. 34 verse 5:

“So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.”

[6] *“And he (the LORD God) buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day.”*

[8] “*And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.*”

These scriptures give us an insight into God’s mind regarding these matters: it does not really matter where a man’s burial place or grave is, which is contrary to our contemporary culture in which a lot of effort and money are expended in things like casket, grave etc. God was the one who buried him personally and he says to us: “***Let the dead, bury their dead.***” The next point worth noting is that there was a definite period for the mourning for Moses: 30 days. All Israel wept and mourned for him – this is godly. There was no record that there was a memorial service for Moses nor a second burial for him more especially as his body, and burial place were not found. Mourning should be for a period of time after which God requires us to move on in him.

In conclusion therefore, it is an honour for one to be mourned and buried but we are not to worship the dead or to become entangled thereby. May the LORD God help us to obey him from our hearts and to overcome in these circumstances. Amen.

EPILOGUE

In this book, we have had the opportunity to review the scriptures as it relates to priesthood. We have seen that a priest is one who brings an offering either to God Almighty or to the devil even as recorded in Deut. 32:17

“They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not....”

We also saw that this priesthood or worship has been embedded and interwoven with the culture and tradition of our people. Our lifestyle is one that is based on idolatry and whoredom just as was the case with the Canaanites and Amorites. The judgment of God is sure and determined unto all those who pollute the land with their whoredoms because when the iniquity of the Amorites came to a full God cast them forth just as he did to His own people also: firstly with Israel (Ephraim) when the Assyrians took them captive in 721 B.C. and later on with Judah and Jerusalem when the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar carried them away into slavery and bondage, in 586 B.C.

At this end of time, we have also seen that the judgment of God is sure, certain and imminent for the deeds and iniquities of the people have come to the full. Hence, God is bringing a separation within the church: between the wise virgins and the foolish virgins, between the wheat and the tares and between “the sons of Zadok” who have separated themselves from the vile and abominable worship within the house of the LORD and the “sons of Eli” who are defiling the bride of Christ and themselves at this hour.

We can no longer continue to halt between these two tendencies and grouping within the body of Christ. We have to make a choice. We pray that the message in this book would enrich your heart with grace and faith to choose to be a priest unto God after the order of Melchizedek: Deut. 30:19

“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:”

Joshua 24:15

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

We pray that you will not make a wrong choice just as did Lot in choosing that which was pleasant to the eyes but alas, it was a choice for Sodom and Gomorrah, a place and people that had already been marked in the spirit for destruction. May the LORD help his people in this hour to count the cost, pay the price and reject the delicacies of Sodom and Egypt. Amen.

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