

# WORSHIPING ON THE LORD'S DAY

August 11, 2013

*Worship, as God intended, is a supernatural event. As we enter into this service of worship, we cross the threshold of the secular to the sacred, from the common to the uncommon, from the profane to the holy. Prepare yourself therefore for this most holy convocation!*

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Prelude

Worship Theme

God is Unwearying

Isaiah 40:28-31: "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, and to *him who* lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up *with wings like eagles*, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary."

**God Calls us to Worship Before the Cross** Ps. 108:3-5

+We Adore Him

Hymn #3, "Give To Our God Immortal Praise" *Based on Ps. 136*

We Confess Our Sin

O Father, our hearts often betray You. We have often enthroned ourselves in Your place. We have thought of ourselves as humble, when in reality, we are exceedingly proud. Our faces have not often enough been covered with shame. O Lord Jesus, our disgrace is indeed before us.

Come now, Holy Spirit, the One who has applied to us the redemption purchased by Christ, and enable us to walk in new humility. Help us to see that so long as we look down on others, we can never look up to You. So long as we are proud, we cannot know You. O God, we long to know You. Rise up and help us; redeem us because of Your unfailing love. Amen.

We Thank Him For His Forgiveness

Hymn #261, "What Wondrous Love Is This"

**God Calls us to Worship Thru Dedication** Gal. 6:9-10

We Give Him Our Offering & Concerns

We Give Him Ourselves

Hymn #251, "Beneath The Cross Of Jesus"

**God Calls us to Worship Thru Fellowship** Ps. 119:169-176

We Read His Word

Sermon

\*We Partake Of The Lord's Supper

Hymn #735, "Gloria Patri"

**God Blesses us in the Benediction**

Welcome and Announcements

Postlude

(Containers have been placed at the front for communion cups and small trash)

+You are invited to raise your hands during the prayer of adoration.

\*Visitors, please see note below on the Lord's Supper.

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**Welcome to Bethel Presbyterian Church!** To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest; to all who mourn and long for comfort; to all who struggle and desire victory; to all who sin and need a Savior; to all who are strangers and want fellowship; to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness; and to whomsoever will come-- this church opens wide her doors and offers welcome in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We invite you to **sign** the attendance card in your bulletin and drop it in the offering. You are invited to stay for **Sunday School** which begins at 11:30.

**REGARDING THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

The Lord's Supper is for baptized believers who are in good standing in a Christian church (that is, not harboring unrepentant sin, not under any discipline of the church, and attending worship services faithfully). As fellow believers, we welcome you to participate in this New Covenant sacrament with us. The bread served during the meal is gluten free.

**PREPARING FOR WORSHIP**

In preparation for next week's worship (Theme: ), please use the following hymns in your personal and/or family devotions this coming week: #s .

**Apostasy on Trial, Pt. 5**  
Jeremiah 2:1-19  
*Study Notes for August 11, 2013*

- A. The Declaration of Intent, v. 9.
- B. The Reason for the Trial, vv. 1-8.
- C. The Seriousness of the Crime, vv. 10-12.

**D. The Transgression, vv. 13, 11b.**

- 1. The Rejection of God, vv. 11b, 13a.
  - a. His Provisions, v. 11b.
  - b. His Person, v. 13a.
  - c. His "Program," v. 13b.

**2. The Worship and Service of Baal, v. 13b.**

In recent years it has been fashionable on account of the Grace-movement to take this latter expression in light of the cross of Christ... To be sure, there is something to be said for this. However it is clear that Jeremiah had a broader transgression in mind when he wrote this passage. We see it in Jer. 2:23a and 2:11b.

From this we see "The Transgression" addressed by Jeremiah in this text! The people of Judah changed their God from Yahweh to Baal (v. 11)! And from Jeremiah's words in this passage, we conclude that most didn't even know it (cf. again v. 23). Evidently the nation maintained the shell/façade of the religion of Yahweh, but through and through the nation had become worshippers and servants of Baal! Accordingly, to understand "The Transgression" of the people at this time, we need to be somewhat familiar with Baalism. Notice with me...

**a. The Religion of Baal.**

- 1. Baalism was the religion of the Canaanites... The whole religion and culture revolved around aiding Baal in his conquest over the other gods. Let me explain...
  - a. In the religious pantheon of Canaan, there were many, many gods of which for our study the more important deities were...

Baal	Athirat/Ilat/Asherah
Anath	Mot

- b. The Focus of Canaanite Religion

To get a sense of this religion, consider with me Baal's struggle with Mot...

This cosmic struggle- seen in this world every year and yet experienced by any and all suffering illness in any way- throughout was understood to be helped along by man. How did the Canaanites aid in the struggle? By themselves engaging in the procreation activity during worship. In so doing (1) they influenced Anath to rescue Baal, (2) they enable Baal to rise from the dead, and (3) they encouraged Baal to send rain to impregnate the earth!

- 2. In light of all of this, a large part of the religion of Baal involved the sexual union. But that was the tip of the ice-berg. An important emphasis of this religion was on communing with the deity through the semi-hypnotic state called "Ecstasy"...

**Eugene Peterson** wrote, "The emphasis of Baalism was on psychophysical relatedness and subjective experience. The gulf between man and God was leveled out of existence by means of participatory rites. The terrifying majesty of God, his 'otherness,' was assimilated to the religious passions of the worshipper. The god of the bull image, the god of wine, the god of the fertility figurine was the god of relevance, fulfilling personal needs with convincing immediacy. The desires that inflamed the soul were fulfilled in the cultic act of worship. The transcendence of the deity was overcome in the ecstasy of feeling. ¶ Sensory participation was featured. Images were necessary- the bolder, the more colorful, the more sensational, the better. Music and dance became the means for drawing persons out of their private diversities and merging them into a mass response. Sexual activity in the cult was frequent since it achieved the primary Baalistic goal so completely- the ecstatic plunge of the whole sensory person into the passion of the religious moment."

**S. Angus** wrote, "The mystes [the worshipper] was brought into a mystic ineffable condition in which the normal functions of personality were in abeyance and the moral strivings which form character

virtually ceased or were relaxed, while the emotional and the intuitive were accentuated. ¶ In ecstasy the devotee was lifted above the level of his ordinary experience into an abnormal consciousness of an exhilarating condition in which the body ceased to be a hindrance to the soul. Ecstasy might be of a passive character resembling a trance, or of an active orgiastic character of excitation resembling what Plato calls 'divine frenzy.' According to the means of induction, the temperament of the initiate, and his spiritual history, ecstasy might range anywhere from non-moral delirium to that consciousness of oneness with the Invisible and the dissolution of painful individuality which marks the mystics of all ages." (*The Mystery-Religions and Christianity*, pp. 100-101)

**B. B. Warfield** wrote, "It is characteristic of mysticism that it makes its appeal to the feelings as the sole, or at least as the normative, source of knowledge of divine things... The common element in all these varieties of mysticism is that they all seek... the knowledge of God in human feelings, which they look upon as the sole or at least the most trust-worthy or the most direct source of the knowledge of God." (*The Works of B. B. Warfield*, IX, pp. 651, 653-654)

\*Point: Fundamental to all Mystery Religion is the view that god is a force to be experienced. And depending on the particular expression of this cult, there were a variety of means/portals that could be used to induce this "union of ecstasy": wine, music, dancing, orgies, repetitive phrases, child sacrifice. That is Baalism in a nutshell! It was a religion of ascendancy by which the worshipper communed with Baal (primarily through sexual relations) and so influenced the deity to bring success, health, and fruitfulness to the land.

3. Now did the Israelites in Jeremiah's day adopt the theological system of Baal? Obviously not (for the nation was shocked when Jeremiah accused them of being "Baalists," Jer. 2:23). Well then, what did Israel adopt when it came to Baalism? Its liturgy; its approach to their deity in the context of worship.

**Eugene Peterson** wrote, "While the prophetic accusation of 'harlotry' had a literal reference to the sacred prostitution of the Baal cult, it extended its meaning by metaphor into the entire theology of worship. It referred to worship that sought fulfillment through self-expression, worship that accepted the needs and desires and passions of the worshiper as its raw material. 'Harlotry' is worship that says, 'I will give you satisfaction. You want religious feelings? I will give them to you. You want your needs fulfilled? I'll do it in the form most attractive to you.' ¶ The divine will that sets itself in opposition to the tastes, preoccupations, and perceptions of humanity is incomprehensible in Baalism and so is impatiently discarded. Baalism is worship reduced to the spiritual stature of the worshiper. Its cannons are that it should be interesting, relevant, and exciting." (*Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work*, p. 181)

God's people had before them the cold, objective worship of Yahweh AND the "warm," exciting, ever changing, subjective worship of Baal which always involved an emotional climax of some sort... and which do you suppose they chose? They not only chose Baalism over the worship of God, but they filled their worship services so much that the vestal virgins couldn't keep up with the demand; local prostitutes had to be employed to make up for the slack!!! AND, according to Dom Gregory Dix in *The Shape of the Liturgy*, because our liturgy is that which influences and shapes our life, this approach infected Israel's entire way of living such that Jeremiah could say, "...look at your way in the valley!" (Jer. 2:23b)

**b. The Relevancy of Baalism, Gen. 11:1-9; Rev. 17:5.**

1. To see the relevancy of the struggle God's people had in Jeremiah's day, we have to go all the way back in our Bibles to Gen. 11:1-9 and the Tower of Babel...
2. What does all of this have to do with us? Don't Miss It: THE religion that will be prominent at the end of this age is the religion of Babel, Rev. 17:5!

With this as our foundation, look again at **The Transgression** God levels against His people...

Jer. 2:13

On an emotional plane in this life, there is no question that Christianity cannot hold a candle to Baalism. Yet in spite of Baalism's excitement and zeal- in spite of the fact that Baalism today is what grows churches fast- we conclude from this passage that Neo-Baalism in the end will let the worshipper down as it is all show; it has no content. It is a "broken cistern that can hold no water"! The harsh realities of this state of sin and misery eventually crash in upon us; and when this happens, little will have been gained by the spiritual highs that have been enjoyed on Sunday, in a quiet time, or in listening to a song. No! What the Christian needs is NOT an experience, BUT the service, worship, and fellowship of a Being who conquered the grave, ascended into heaven, and then condescended to the mess we call our lives in order to speak the words, "Peace! It is well with your soul!"