

## **BOWING THE KNEE TO BAAL (part 1 of 7; next post: tomorrow – 3/24/2021)**

This unique expression occurs twice in the Word of God, once in the Old Testament and once in the New. The common thread which connects each reference involves the concept of a “remnant” of true believers in the context of rampant apostasy. In addition, both statements are made in connection with the need for a “purging” of the apostates. This segment will be devoted to the Divine assertion found in 1 Kings 19:18, where we read the following –

**“Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.”**

In this quote we have God responding to the complaint of Elijah the prophet who believes that he alone, in all of Israel, remains as a true believer in the Lord, the God of hosts (1 Kings 19:10, 14). God corrects that mistaken notion, by making Elijah aware of 7,000 others who share his commitment to the true and living God; rejecting the trend toward apostasy in the nation at that time.

What factors created this heretical tendency toward idolatry? It was primarily due to the evil influence of a woman named Jezebel. She was the daughter of Ethbaal, the Sidonian king of a Canaanite city north of Tyre, whose chief gods were Baal and Ashteroth. Jezebel was a zealous worshipper of Baal and upon her marriage to Ahab, the Israelite king, she seized upon that opportunity to introduce the worship of Baal to the Jewish people. She also established an entourage of 450 prophets of Baal, as well as 400 prophets of Ashteroth, to help in propagating this pagan religion; which in turn created the need for a purging. That house cleaning was initiated by Elijah at Mount Carmel, the record of which is found in 1 Kings 18:17-40. It is an incredibly dramatic event which is worthy of being read in its entirety.

That will be our focus in our next segment. But for now, the practical application is simply this. Whether in the life of an individual Christian, or a local church, there will be times when a purge is necessary. The most obvious example in the New Testament concerns the church at Corinth, where a man is guilty of immorality, while the church allows it to continue. Paul confronts the church, the church disciplines the individual by putting him out of the fellowship. This in turn produces the desired response of repentance; with Paul then encouraging the church to forgive and restore that penitent believer. The entire scenario is recorded in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, as well as 2 Corinthians 2:1-11. In future studies, we will make an application of this principle in regard to the critical need which exists within my current generation of American Evangelicals.