



THE ANÁSTASIS CENTER
FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & MINISTRY

Reconstruction

The Deep Roots of Early Christian Theology

Reconstruction: Objectives

- Deconstructing Christian faith is common
- Common outcomes: Collapse? Holes?
- Why construct at all?
- Early Christianity helps us discern a strong foundation

Reconstruction: Objectives

- Identify controversial issues commonly debated in Western Christianity
- Examine early Christian views on the issue
- Identify if, where, and why Christians shifted on the issue
- Recover a framework for approaching the issue in today's context



Reconstruction

The Deep Roots of Early Christian Theology

- 4/30 Slavery: How the Early Church Got It Right
- 5/7 Women in the Early Church
- 5/14 The Goodness of God and the Healing of Creation:
Ministry According to Athanasius of Alexandria
- 5/21 Does God Have a Dark Side? Hell in the Early Church
- 5/28 Scripture: How Authoritative Is It? Why Do We Need It?
- 6/4 Scripture: Is the Bible the Product of Empire? Violence?
- 6/11 Politics, the Church, and Jesus' Restorative Justice
- 6/18 Sexual Ethics and the New Creation
- 6/25 The Person, the Face, and the Climb Up the Mountain:
Gregory of Nyssa and the Shaping of Desire



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Scripture: Is the Bible the Product of Violence? Empire?

Mako A. Nagasawa

The Anástasis Center for Christian Education and Ministry

Outline

- Introduction: The Many Uses of History (5 min)
- Israel: Justifications for Violence?
 - Before the Sinai Covenant
 - In the Sinai Covenant
- Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?
 - The Structure of an Empire?
 - The Preservation of the Old Testament
- The Canonization of the Old Testament

Outline

- **Introduction: The Many Uses of History (5 min)**
- Israel: Justifications for Violence?
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The Many Uses of History

- Modern Turkey and the Armenian Genocide
- Ancient and Modern China
- Ancient Egypt
 - Never recorded defeats
 - No record of Hyksos supremacy 1786 – 1550 BCE

The Many Uses of History

- Who Produces the Ideas?
- Who Preserves the Literature?

Outline

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Israel: Justifications for Violence? Before the Sinai Covenant

- God allowed all human violence
 - Cain murdered Abel (Gen.4:1 – 8)
 - Cain's civilization and lineage (Gen.4:18 – 24)
 - Overwhelming human violence (Gen.6:5 – 6)
- God protected the family of faith
 - Noah's flood (Gen.6:9 – 9:29)

Israel: Justifications for Violence? Before the Sinai Covenant

- God authorized defensive violence
 - God permitted reciprocal, limited violence (Gen.9:5 – 6)
 - Human empires monopolize violence (Gen.11)
- God rebuilt a community of faith, protecting them from
 - Sodom and Gomorrah
 - For exclusion and violence (Gen.19:5 – 9) despite previous deliverance (Gen.14:17 – 24)
 - City-state tension counteracted by sibling reconciliation (Gen.37 – 50)
 - Onan
 - For excluding Tamar from the family (Gen.38:8 – 10)
 - Pharaoh
 - For killing and controlling God's "firstborn" (Ex.4:22)

Israel: Justifications for Violence? In the Sinai Covenant

- God took human life to protect Israel externally
 - Midianites (Num.25 – 31)
 - Canaanites (Dt.1 – Josh.24)
- God took human life to protect Israel internally
 - Golden calf incident (Ex.32 – 33)
 - Aaron's two sons (Lev.10)
 - Korah (Num.16)
 - Moses (Num.20; Dt.34)
 - Uzzah's death (2 Sam.5)
 - A "covenant of death" (2 Cor.3)
- God protected them from too much self-harm, too (see Jesus' descent to the dead, next)

Israel: Justifications for Violence?

In the Sinai Covenant: Canaanites

Josh.6:21 They utterly destroyed everything in the city [of Jericho], both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

Josh.8:25 All who fell that day, both men and women, were 12,000 – all the people of Ai. ²⁶ For Joshua did not withdraw his hand with which he stretched out the javelin until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

Genocide?



Holy War? Crusade/Jihad?



Manifest Destiny?



A Theological Problem?

If you think of God's wrath and love being equal and opposing attributes, then no.

God is arbitrary



God
saves
some
(mercy)

God
destroys
others
(justice)

A Theological Problem?

But if you think of God's love being consistent and for all, then this raises big questions.

God is arbitrary



God
saves
some
(mercy)

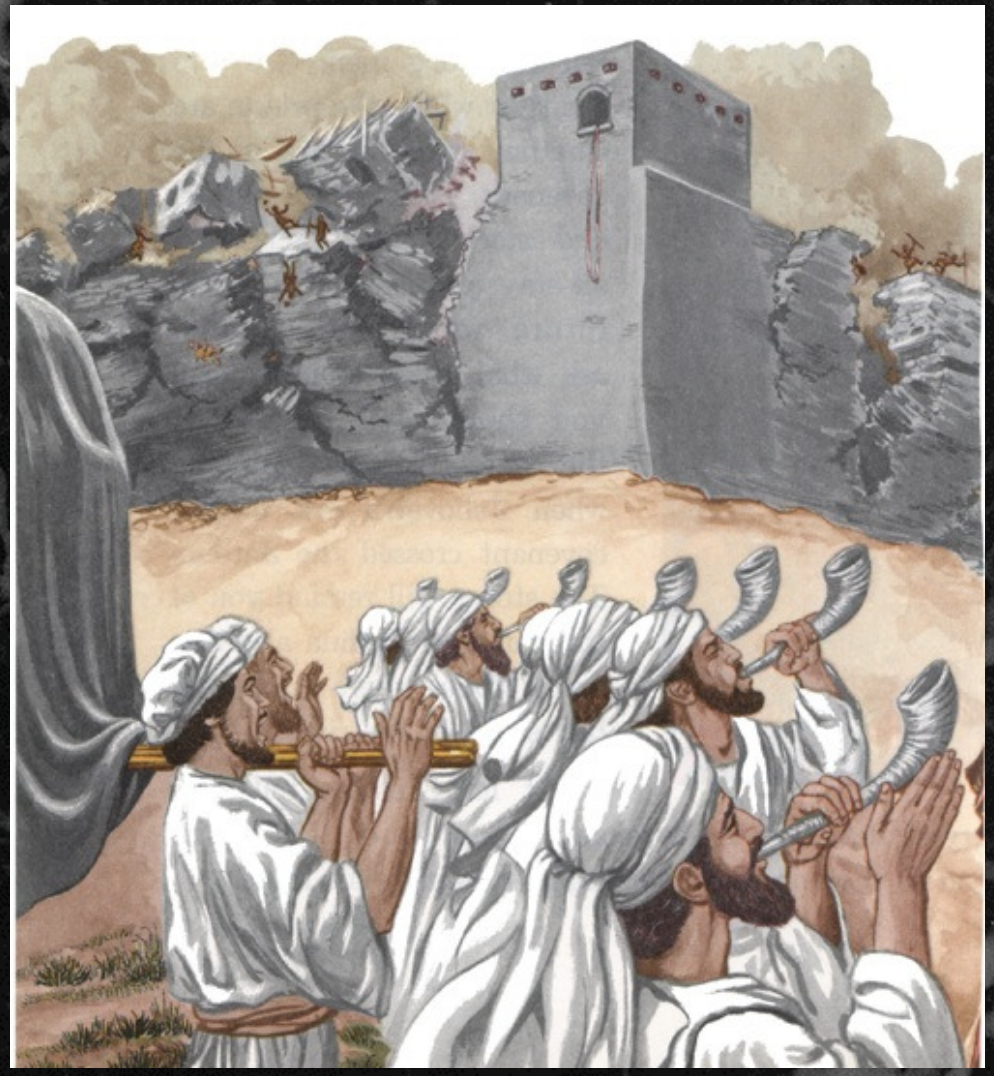
God
destroys
others
(justice)

God is loving
(Trinitarian)



???

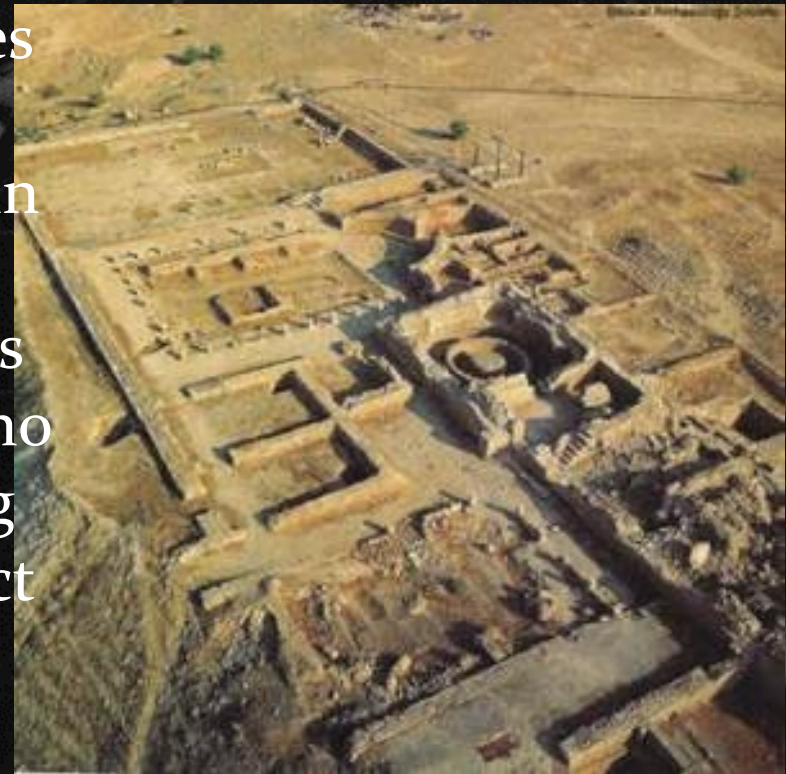
Images of the Battle of Jericho



Realities of the Battles

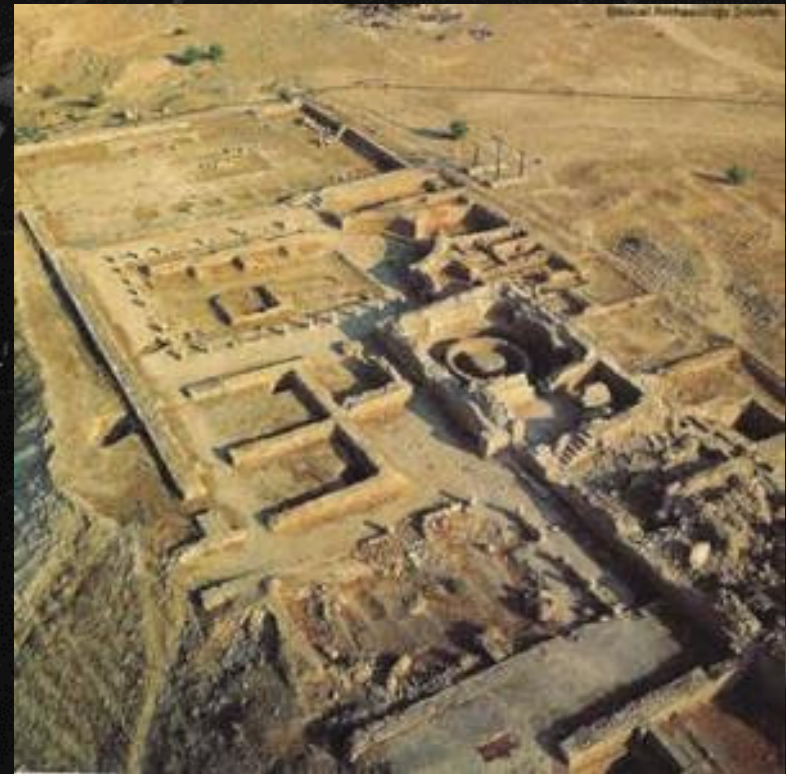
- ‘All the archaeological evidence indicates that **no civilian populations** existed at Jericho, Ai, and other cities mentioned in Joshua... According to the best calculations from Canaanite inscriptions and other archaeological evidence (i.e. no artifacts or ‘prestige’ ceramics indicating wealth/social status, as one would expect in general population centers), Jericho was a small settlement of probably one hundred or fewer **soldiers**. This is why all of Israel could circle it seven times and then do battle against it on the same day.’

*(Richard Hess, *The Jericho and Ai of the Book of Joshua*; Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?*)*



Realities of the Battles

- Israel attacked military fortresses
- No civilians
- Soldiers only



How to Explain This?

Josh.6:21 They utterly destroyed everything in the city [of Jericho], both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

Josh.8:25 All who fell that day, both men and women, were 12,000 – all the people of Ai. ²⁶ For Joshua did not withdraw his hand with which he stretched out the javelin until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

How to Explain This?

- It's Symbolic
 - Non-historical, non-literal exegesis
 - Philo of Alexandria: Hellenistic Jew
 - Platonism: Middle-Platonist and Neoplatonist readings of Homer
 - Origen's method of allegory and/or typology
 - Note: New Testament follows Old Testament patterns of relating one history to an earlier history
 - e.g. Spirit over creation's waters (Gen.1:1 – 2), echoed again over the flood's waters (Gen.8:1)
 - NT use of Israel's stories: 1 Corinthians 10:1 – 13; Galatians 4:21 – 31; Hebrews 1 – 3
 - Stories are “containers” filled by later stories

How to Explain This?

- It's Erroneous
 - Human error
 - Israel misheard/misinterpreted God
 - Divine error
 - Jesus himself did not quote from these episodes
 - This was so inferior as to be ignorable
 - God was wrong
- Other possibilities?

Language of Victory: Now

- We kicked their butts
- We slaughtered them
- We wiped the floor with them
- We beat them down so hard they're never gonna get up

Language of Victory: Then

- Egypt's Tuthmosis III (later fifteenth century) boasted that **'the numerous army of Mitanni was overthrown within the hour, annihilated totally like those (now) not existent.'** In fact, Mitanni's forces lived on to fight in the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries BC.



Language of Victory: Then

- The 'Bulletin' of Ramses II tells of Egypt's less-than-spectacular victories in Syria (around 1274 BC). Nevertheless, he announces that he slew *'the entire force'* of the Hittites, indeed *'all the chiefs of all the countries'*, disregarding the 'millions of foreigners,' which he considered *'chaff.'*



Language of Victory: Then

- In the Merneptah Stele (ca. 1230 BC), Rameses II's son Merneptah announced, 'Israel is wasted, *his seed is not*,' another very premature declaration.



Language of Victory: Then

- Hittite king Mursilli II (who ruled from 1322 – 1295 BC) recorded making ‘*Mt. Asharpaya empty (of humanity)*’ and the ‘*mountains of Tarikarimu empty (of humanity)*.’



Language of Victory: Then

- Ashurnasirpal of Assyria (1050 – 1031 BC) detailed in stone, in one of his temple reliefs, his burning, mutilating, and hanging of captives, including boys and girls.



Language of Victory: Then

- Moab's king Mesha (840/830 BC) bragged that the Northern Kingdom of 'Israel has *utterly perished for always*,' which was over a century premature. The Assyrians devastated Israel in 722 BC. Also, when Mesha described his victory over two Israelite towns, *he boasted of killing women and girls*.



Language of Victory: Then

- The Assyrian ruler Sennacherib (701 – 681 BC) used similar hyperbole: ‘The soldiers of Hirimme, dangerous enemies, I cut down with the sword; and *not one escaped.*’



Language of Victory: Scripture

- Hyperbolic victory language
 - Josh.10:40 Thus Joshua struck all the land, the hill country and the Negev and the lowland and the slopes and all their kings. **He left no survivor, but he utterly destroyed all who breathed, just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded.** ⁴¹ Joshua struck them from Kadesh-barnea even as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen even as far as Gibeon. ⁴² Joshua captured all these kings and their lands at one time, because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel.
 - Josh.11:22 There were **no Anakim left** in the land of the sons of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod some remained.

Language of Victory: Scripture

- But ongoing co-existence:
 - Josh.14:12 Now then, give me **this hill country** about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive **them** out as the LORD has spoken.' (see also Josh.15:13 – 15)

Language of Victory: Scripture

- But ongoing co-existence:
 - Josh.23:12 For if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these nations, **these which remain among you**, and intermarry with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, ¹³ know with certainty that the LORD your God will not continue to drive these nations out from before you; but they will be a snare and a trap to you, and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you.

Language of Victory: Scripture

- But ongoing co-existence:
 - Josh.13:1 Now Joshua was old and advanced in years when the LORD said to him, 'You are old and advanced in years, and very much of the land remains to be possessed...
 - Josh.16:10 But they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites live in the midst of Ephraim to this day...
 - Josh.17:12 But the sons of Manasseh could not take possession of these cities, because the Canaanites persisted in living in that land.

Language of Victory: Scripture

- God's original command: "utterly destroy"
 - Deut.7:1 When the LORD your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you, ² and when the LORD your God delivers them before you and **you defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them.** You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them.

Language of Victory: Scripture

- But God and Moses also warn against “assimilation” implying being a neighbor
 - Deut.7:3 Furthermore, you shall not **intermarry** with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. 4 For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you. 5 But thus you shall do to them: you shall tear down their altars, and smash their sacred pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire.

Language of Victory: Scripture

- Notice: peaceful displacement
 - Deut.6:10 Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, ¹¹ and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied...

Language of Victory: Scripture

- Principle: What makes you a brilliant communicator in one culture is precisely what makes you hard to understand in another.
- Cultural-historical context
 - Idiomatic phrases must be translated idea-for-idea, not simply word-for-word
 - Example: “I spilled the beans; I let the cat out of the bag; my mom hit the ceiling.”
- Literary context
 - Whole books: movies, not slide shows

Israel's Terms

- They accepted surrender and defection



- Josh.6:25 However, Rahab the harlot and her father's household and all she had, Joshua spared; and she has lived in the midst of Israel to this day, for she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

Israel's Terms

- They offered terms of surrender



- Josh.11:19 There was not a city which made peace with the sons of Israel except the Hivites living in Gibeon; they took them all in battle.

Israel's Terms

- Israel incorporated Canaanites, *so this was not about their ethnicity, and this was not genocide*
 - Judah married Shua (Gen.38:2)
 - Tamar (Gen.38:6) gave birth to Judah's children
 - Shaul (Ex.6:15)
 - A “mixed multitude” joined Israel (Ex.12:38)
 - Caleb (Num.32:12; one of Moses' two lieutenants)
 - Rahab (Josh.6:17 – 25; became an ancestor of Jesus)
 - Hivites (Josh.9 – 11) incorporated and defended
- Jericho, Ai, Hazor: A controlled operation to cut the nerve of the Canaanites' military power

Israel's Terms

- God did not command Israel to kill all the Canaanites
- Israel was open to accepting Canaanites through conversion
- Israel was rejecting Canaanite religious beliefs and practices
 - What were those beliefs and practices?

The Canaanites' Sins



- Attacking Israel at its most vulnerable
 - Amalekites (Ex.17:8 – 13), Arad (Num.21:1), the Amorites (Num.21:21 – 26; Dt. 2:26 – 37), and Bashan (Num.21:33 – 35; Dt.3:1 – 22).
 - Balak the king of Moab also wanted to attack Israel but was stopped by God through Balaam and a donkey (Num.22 – 24).
 - Israel did nothing to provoke these peoples.
- Forced enslavement (Num.21:1)

The Canaanites' Sins



- Rape to express dominance over strangers and conquered peoples (Genesis 19)
- Incest, bearing children through incest (Leviticus 18)

The Canaanites' Sins

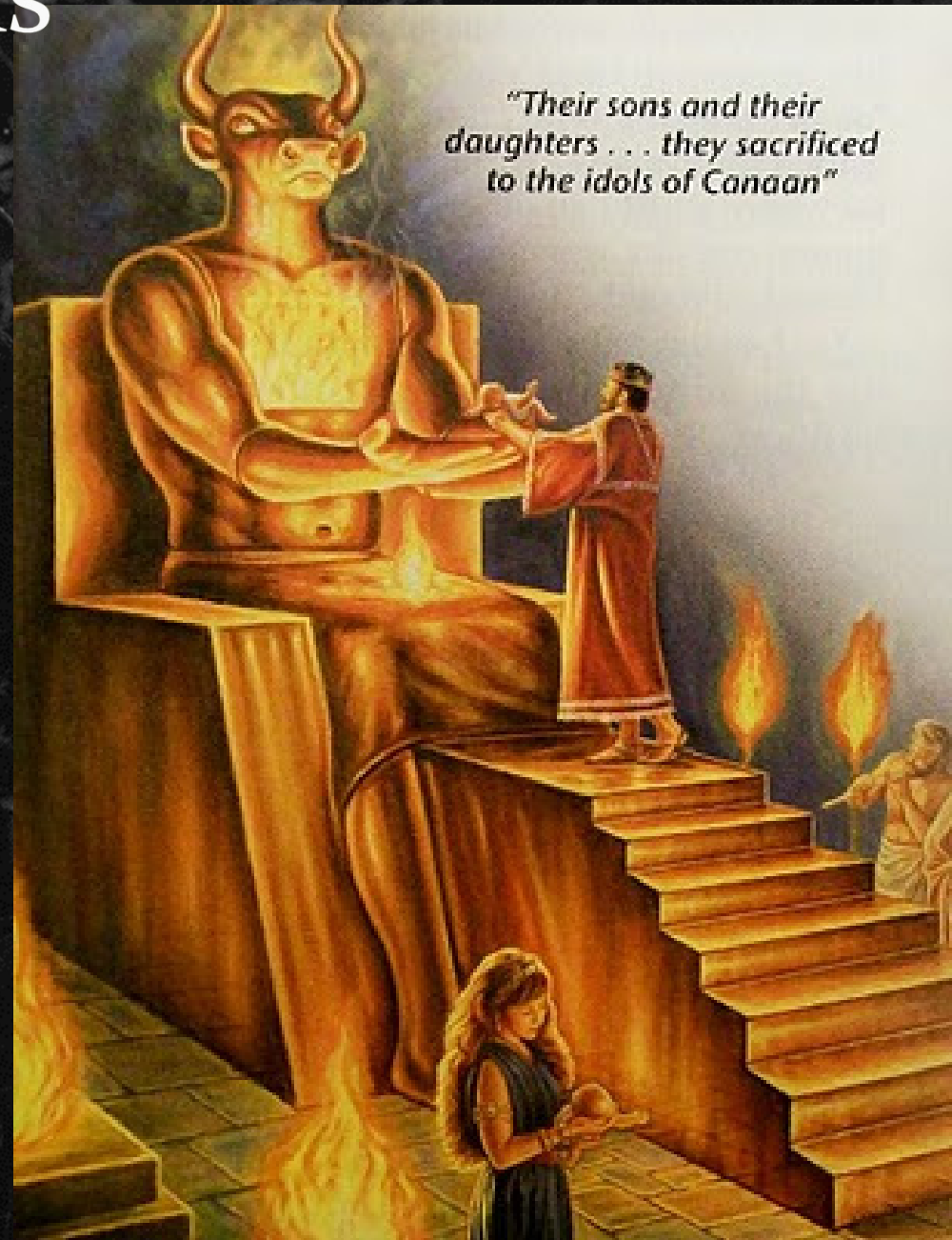


- Human sacrifices and cult of sex
 - ‘The Canaanites, with their orgiastic nature-worship, their cult of fertility in the form of serpent symbols and sensuous nudity, and their gross mythology, were replaced by Israel, with its nomadic simplicity..., its... monotheism, and its severe code of ethics. In a not altogether dissimilar way, a millennium later, the African Canaanites, as they still called themselves, or the Carthaginians, as we call them, with the... Phoenician mythology which we know from Ugarit and Philo Byblius, with human sacrifices and the cult of sex, were crushed by the immensely superior Romans...’ (William F. Albright,

Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan)

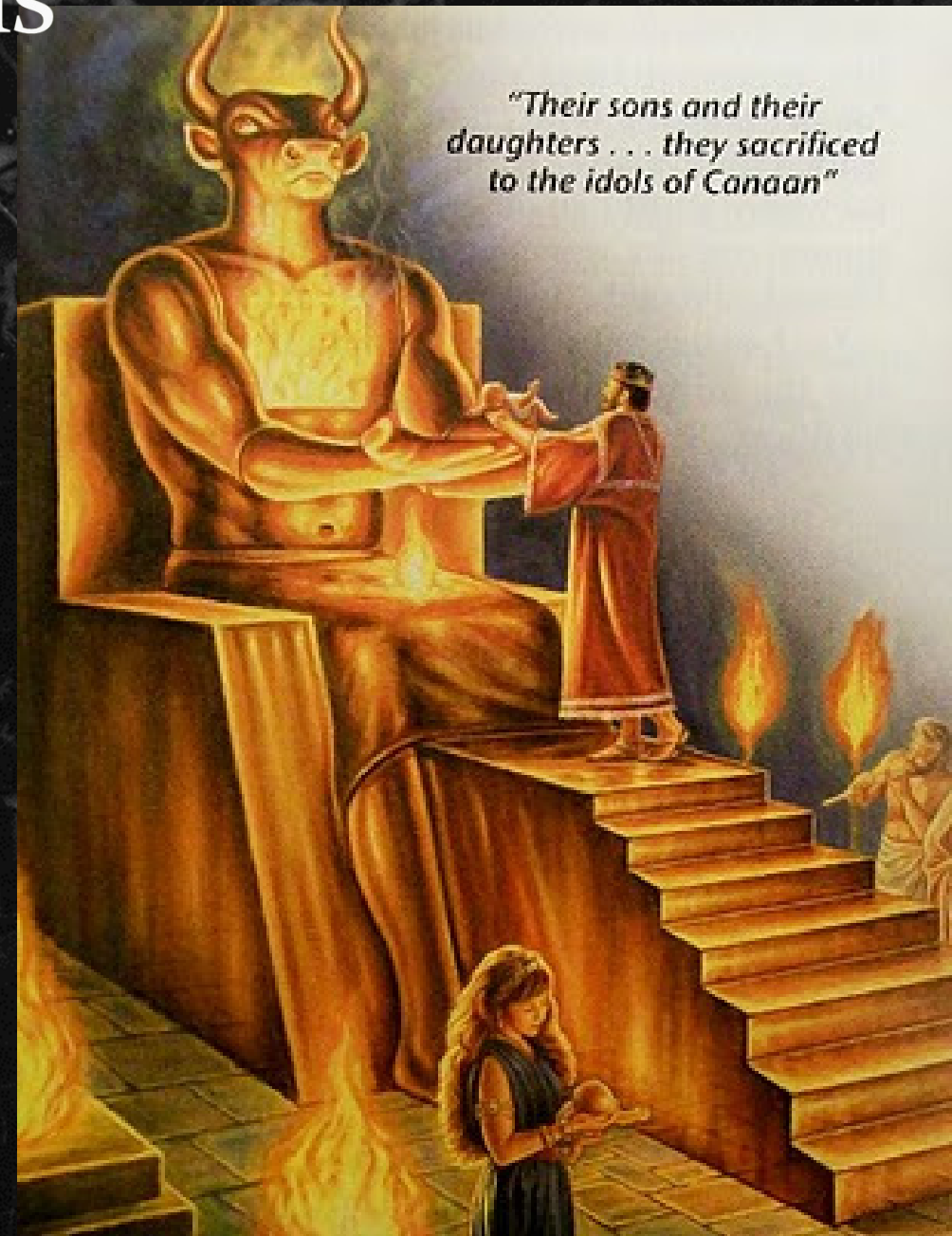
The Canaanites' Sins

- Child sacrifice:
 - Archaeology
 - Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity*, p.21)
 - Literature
 - Greco-Roman
 - Rabbinical
 - Biblical
 - See Appendix A



The Canaanites' Sins

- How would a defeated, child-sacrificing people try to avenge themselves?
- A parallel: How would people stuck in a culture of gang violence and self-mutilation respond to an outside threat?



The Character and Purpose of God

Three basic choices

- God causes human evil
- God ignores human evil
- God limits human evil



The Character and Purpose of God

- Did God consign the Canaanites to hell? No.
 - ^{1 Peter 4:6} For the gospel has for this purpose been preached **even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.**
 - ^{1 Peter 3:19} He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison...

The Character and Purpose of God

- Did God consign the Canaanites to hell? No.

“I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

Amen.”

The Apostles' Creed (*decentralized, spontaneous* development across churches in the 2nd century, testifying to the widespread oral teaching that Jesus went to the dead)

The Character and Purpose of God

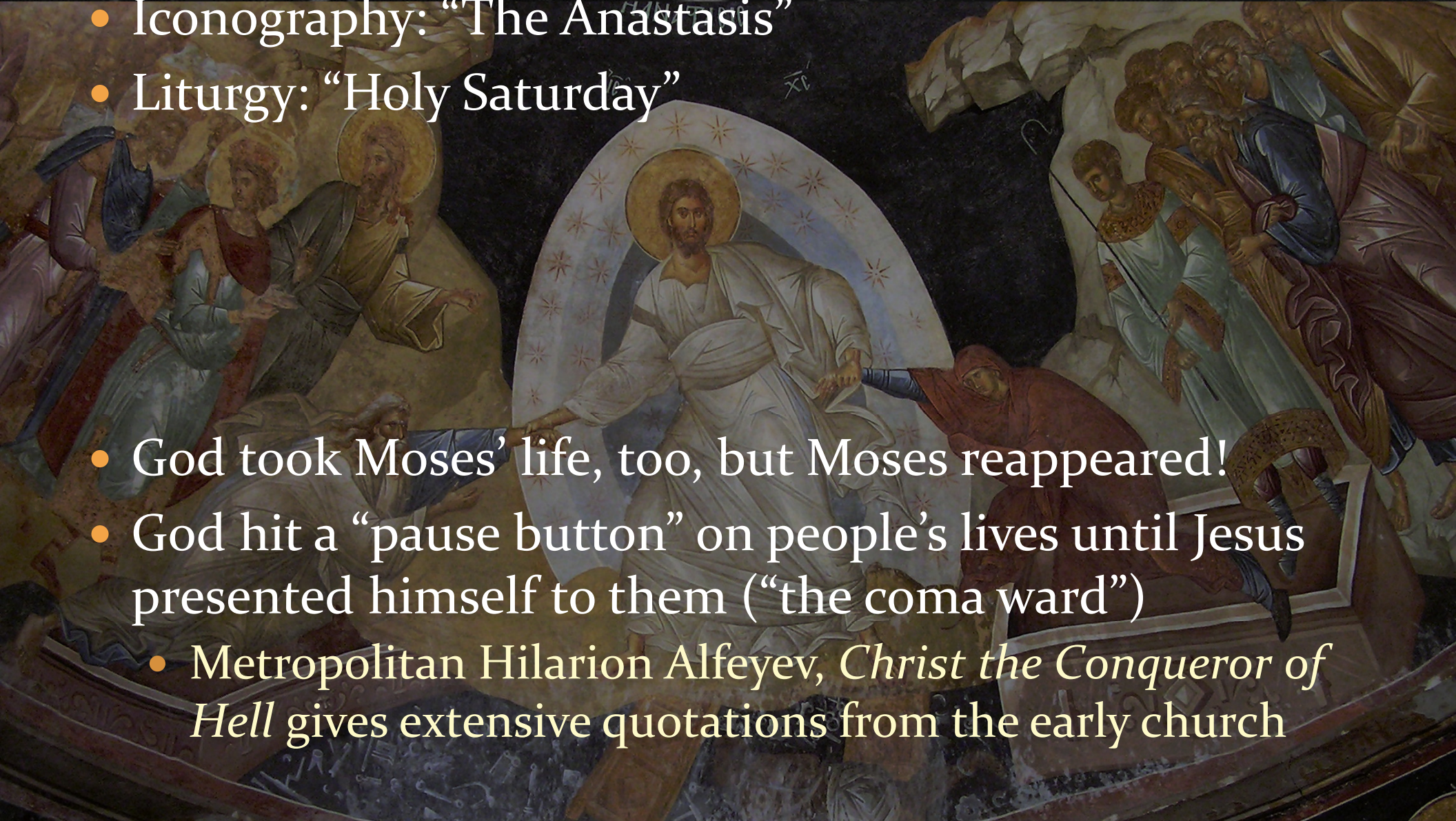
- Did God consign the Canaanites to hell? No.

“...For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man;
so God and Man is one Christ;
Who suffered for our salvation;
descended into hell;
rose again the third day from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
he sitteth on the right hand of the God the Father Almighty,
from whence he will come to judge the quick and the dead...”

The Athanasian Creed (possibly 4th or 5th century)

The Character and Purpose of God

- Iconography: “The Anastasis”
- Liturgy: “Holy Saturday”
- God took Moses’ life, too, but Moses reappeared!
- God hit a “pause button” on people’s lives until Jesus presented himself to them (“the coma ward”)
 - Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev, *Christ the Conqueror of Hell* gives extensive quotations from the early church



The Character and Purpose of God

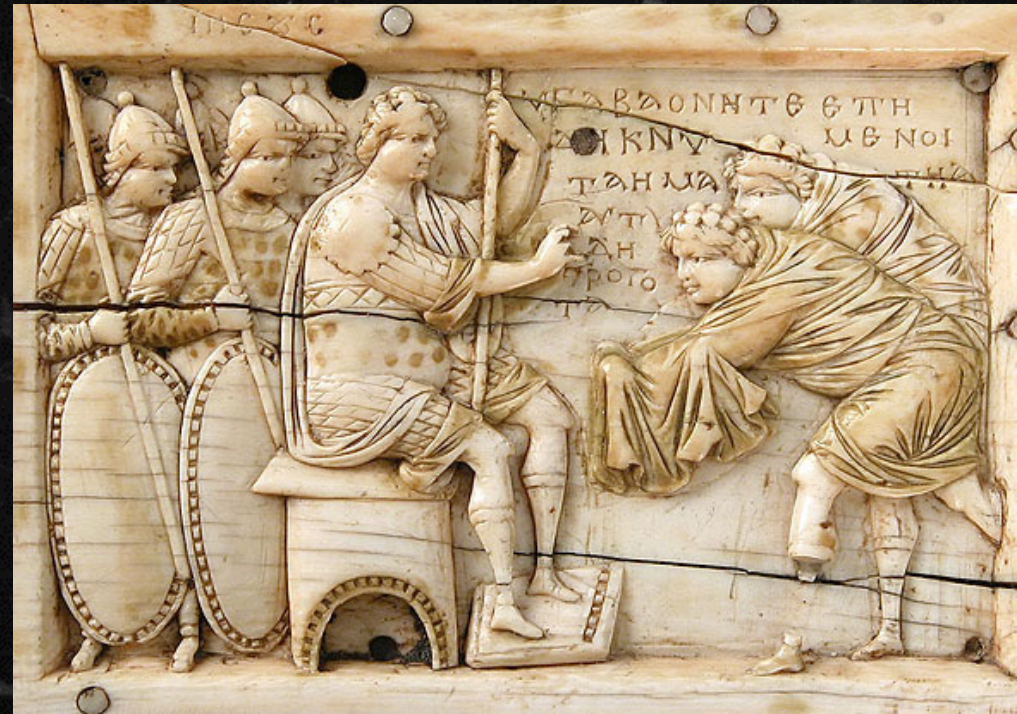
- How did God reach out to the Canaanites beforehand?
 - Noah, the grandfather of Canaan (Gen.9:18 – 27)
 - Scattering Babel (Gen.11:1 – 9)
 - Abraham and Sarah (Gen.11:27 – 25:11), including rescue
 - Melchizedek (Gen.14:18 – 20)
 - Four hundred years of patience with the Amorites and other Canaanites (Gen.15:16)
 - The warning of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen.19)
 - Isaac and Rebekah (Gen.21:1 – 35:29)
 - Jacob and his family (Gen.33:18 – Gen.45:28)
 - The marriage of Judah and Shua, Judah's son to Tamar, and Tamar's children by Judah (Gen.38)
 - Salvation from famine by Joseph (Gen.41:57)

The Character and Purpose of God

- How did God reach out to the Canaanites beforehand?
 - “Mixed multitude” joined Israel (Ex.12:38)
 - Broadcasting His power for forty years between the Exodus from Egypt and Canaan (Ex.15:15; Josh.2:10)
 - Calling for surrender, accepting defectors like Rahab (Josh.2, 6) and the Hivites into Israel (Josh.9 – 11)
- Plus, Canaanites co-existed with Israel for an extensive period of time
 - “The kindness of God leads us to repentance” (Rom.2:4)

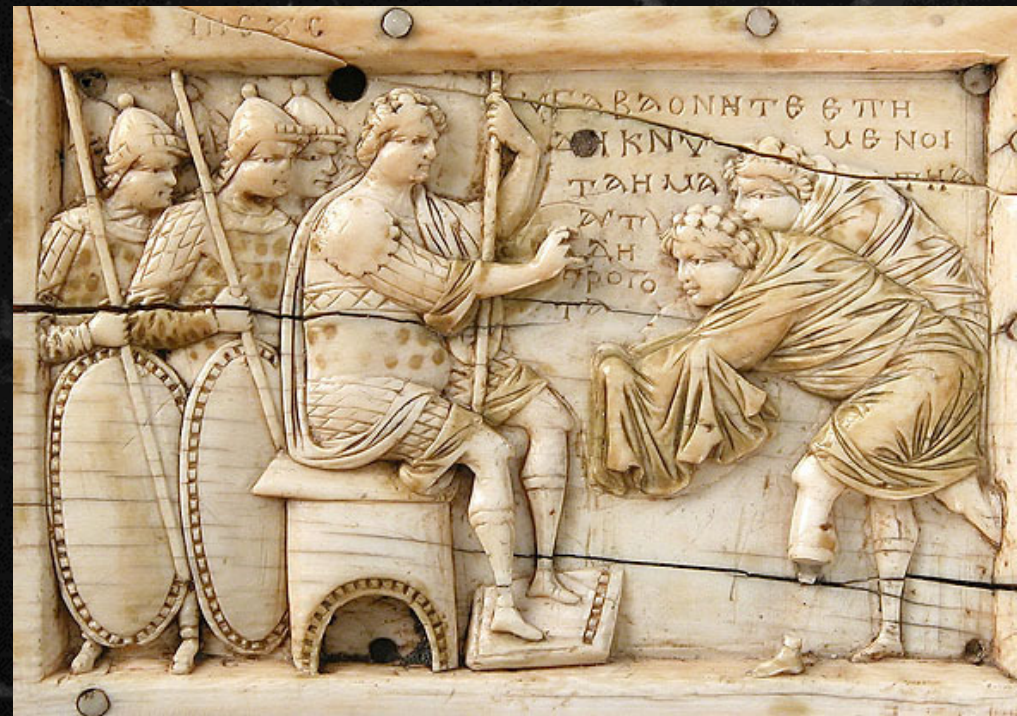
The Character and Purpose of God

- Literary context: Book of Joshua
 - Hivites in Joshua 9 – 11 become part of Israel
 - They became “servants of the sanctuary”
 - Israel defended them from other Canaanites
 - Joshua 9 – 11 is the high point, climax, of Joshua



The Character and Purpose of God

- Literary context: Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets
 - Conversion interpreted as “enemies destroyed”
 - “Edomites” in the *Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets*
 - Incorporated under Davidic rule (Amos 9:12)
 - Also “destroyed” (Obadiah)
 - Applied to “Gentiles” (Acts 15:14 – 18)
 - “No longer Gentiles”
 - Ephesians 4:17
 - 1 Corinthians 10:1
 - Romans 6:1 – 11



The Character and Purpose of God

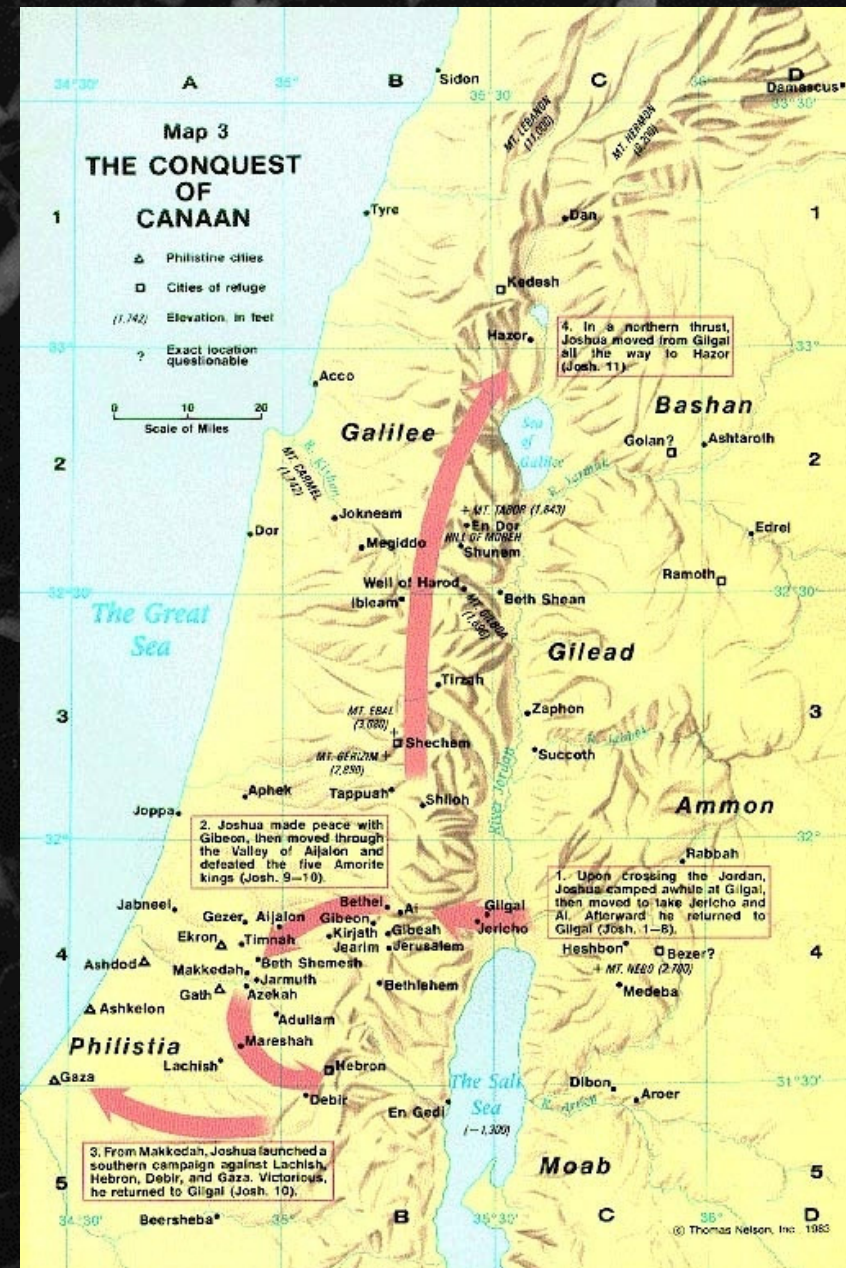
- Canonical context: Jesus and the Canaanites
 - “And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, ‘Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed’... Then Jesus said to her, ‘O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish.’ And her daughter was healed at once.” (Mt.15:22 – 28)
 - “For Christ...went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient... For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.” (1 Pet.3:19; 4:6)

The Character and Purpose of God

- Canonical context: Jesus and the Canaanites
 - “There is a firm belief that there was and still is in Israel a community of proselytes who passed over from the Gentiles into the works of the law... The Canaanites were inhabiting the lands of present day Judea. Whether absorbed by war or dispersed to neighboring places or brought into servitude as a vanquished people, they carried about their name but lacked a native land. Intermingled with the Jews, therefore, these people came from the Gentiles. And since a portion of those among the crowds who believed were proselytes, this Canaanite woman most likely had left her territory, preferring the status of a proselyte—that is, coming out from the Gentiles to the community of a neighboring people. She was appealing on behalf of her daughter, **who was a type for all the Gentile people**. And since she knew the Lord from the law, she addressed him as Son of David. For in the law, the king of the eternal and heavenly kingdom is referred to as the “rod out of the stem of Jesse and the son of David.”
 - Hilary of Poitiers, *On Matthew 15.3; Ancient Christian Commentary*, p.28

The Character and Purpose of God

- The “conquest” of Canaan?
- The “settlement” of Canaan?
- The invitation to Canaan



The Character and Purpose of God

- God's Goal:
 - To protect Israel, Jesus
 - To find a garden home for Israel; no further land
 - Occupy a land *that was becoming vacant*
 - *Bear close, personal witness to a people who were self-destructive, invite them in*
 - *Demonstrate a counter-culture*
- Canaanite Evil:
 - Very real and troubling
 - Threatened Israel
 - Threatened their own children and own survival

The Character and Purpose of God

- Terms of Battle:
 - Israel did not kill women and children
 - A precise campaign against military fortresses
 - Not ethnic, but of geography and faith
 - Conversion and incorporation welcomed
- Costs of Battle:
 - Combatants not consigned to hell, but to a “coma ward” until Jesus awakened them

The Character and Purpose of God

- God's Character:
 - God desires each person to be healed and transformed through Jesus
 - We must work harder to think it through, but fundamentally, consistent

The Character and Purpose of God

- God's Character:
 - Consistent with the patristic assessment of Israel as a medical focus group anticipating a cure
 - Irenaeus of Lyons (130 – 202), *Against Heresies* 4.14.2
 - Gregory of Nazianzus (329 – 389), *Oration* 2.18, 23, 25
 - Macarius of Egypt (4th or 5th century), *Homily* 15.45; 20.6
 - Cyril of Alexandria (376 – 444), *Lecture* 12.6 – 8
 - See Reconstruction 2022, Session 5: Scripture: Is it Authoritative? Why Do We Need It?

Lessons

- Biblical Theology
 - The study of themes traced through the biblical narrative
- Systematic Theology
 - The study of God's character and the attempt to make statements about Him based on the entirety of the biblical data

Lessons

- Biblical Theology
 - Cultural-historical context:
 - Idea-for-idea, not just word-for-word
 - Not random, but is controlled (or at least influenced) by contemporary literature
 - Literary context:
 - Treat the whole book; how does the *Book of Joshua* end? The *Book of the Twelve* handle “Edomites”?
 - Israelites are not “the good guys” per se, or no matter what
 - Same human nature problem as everyone else
 - *But God did want Israel to be a witness to the Canaanites*
 - Canonical context:
 - Whole canon; how does the NT treat it?

Lessons

- Systematic Theology
 - Consistent Trinitarian theology can accommodate the Settlement of Canaan

God is arbitrary



God
saves
some
(mercy)

God
destroys
others
(justice)

God is loving
(Trinitarian)



God in Jesus
offers new humanity
to ALL

Discussion

1. In this understanding of the Canaanites, what was the purpose of the battles? What was its limit?
2. Why did God place the Israelites in their midst?
3. What questions does this leave you with?

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Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Structure of an Empire?

- Relevance of Empire and Canonization
 - Who writes the history?
 - Who is invested in keeping the history?
 - What is the history for?
- General Sociological Pattern
 - “The powerful” are “the literate”

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Structure of an Empire?

- Scripture as Medical-Spiritual Diagnosis: Goal
 - Maximum possible conviction, future partners for Jesus
 - Not simply preservation of documents by a few
 - Literacy serves the mission, counteracts Empire tendencies
 - Parallel to Protestant missions emphasizing literacy: Robert Woodberry, “The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy,” *American Political Science Review* (May 2012)
 - See also “Robert Woodberry: Empire and the Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy,” *Geopolitics and Empire* podcast, June 4, 2020;
<https://guadalajarageopolitics.com/2020/06/04/robert-woodberry-empire-the-missionary-roots-of-liberal-democracy-147/>

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Structure of an Empire?

- Explicit Critique of Empire
 - Israel claimed Empires had sinful origins
 - Cain's city Enoch in Genesis 4:16 – 24
 - Nimrod's city Babel in Genesis 10:1 – 11:9
 - Israel escaped an Empire
 - Serpent on Pharaoh's crown/staff in Exodus 7 and serpent's venom in the people in Numbers 21:4 – 7
 - Israel hoped for deliverance from Empires
 - Isaiah: The Suffering Servant
 - Deliverance from Babylon in Isaiah 13 – 14
 - Conversion of Assyria and Egypt in Isaiah 19 – 20
 - Daniel: The Son of Man
 - Gentile Empires are deformed beasts in Daniel 7
 - Violations of animals in the creation order from Genesis 1

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Structure of an Empire?

- Incorporation of Converts
 - Conversion into a multi-ethnic faith
 - E.g. Caleb was a Canaanite (Kenizzite) (Num.32:12; Gen.15:19)
 - “Mixed multitude” (Ex.12:38)
 - Tribe of Judah incorporated many Gentile converts
 - Tamar the Canaanite (Gen.38)
 - Rahab the Canaanite (Josh.2, 6)
 - Ruth the Moabitess (Ruth 4)
 - Bathsheba the Hittite (2 Sam.12)
 - Eligible for intermarriage
 - Hivites became servants of the sanctuary (Josh.9 – 11)
 - Equal rights for foreigner, stranger, alien (Lev.19:33 – 37; 24:22)

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Structure of an Empire?

- Incorporation of Converts
 - Roman Republic
 - “The Roman Republic had granted citizenship to all the free people of Italy but only slowly and for the most part under duress. The nobles never really accepted other Italians as equals.”
 - Barry Strauss, “Why Ancient Rome Needed Immigrants to Become Powerful,” *History*, April 3, 2019

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Structure of an Empire?

- Incorporation of Converts
 - Athens
 - “Metoikos (literally ‘household-changer’) was... any non-Athenian wanting residence in Athens... While having no citizen rights, of which Athenians were very jealous, they did have access to the courts; but they were unable to own property, so were always lodgers, had to serve in the military, pay a metic tax and, if they became wealthy, were liable for taxes on the rich.”
 - Peter Jones, “How Ancient Athens Handled Immigrants,” *The Spectator*, November 7, 2015

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire? The Structure of an Empire?

- Incorporation of Converts
 - U.S. 2017 – 2021
 - “Give me your tired and your poor who can stand on their own two feet and who will not become a public charge.”
 - Ken Cuchinelli, acting head of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, August 2019

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Structure of an Empire?

- Non-Hierarchy: Women as Leaders in the Community
 - Wife as equal to husband in marriage
 - See Reconstruction 2022, Session 2: Women in the Early Church
 - Irenaeus of Lyons (130 – 202): Eve was stronger
 - John Chrysostom (347 – 407): Eve was not subordinate to Adam
 - A new married couple as equal to parents
 - Man leaves father and mother to join his wife (Gen.2:24 – 25)
 - Recapitulates Adam and Eve inheriting garden land
 - Women can therefore teach and lead the community, as
 - Mothers teaching their children (Prov.1:8)
 - Elders, judges, prophetesses (Judg.4 – 5), teachers of Scripture (2 Ki.22:14 – 20)
 - Sources of Scripture (Gen.25:23; Judg.5; 1 Sam.2; Pr.31)

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Structure of an Empire?

- Non-Hierarchy: The Vulnerability of Women
 - Marital Rape Case
 - Cohen v. State of Israel 1981
 - The Rights of Wives (Ex.21:10)
 - An Early “Me Too Movement” (Dt.22:25 – 27)

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Structure of an Empire?

- Distribution of Land: Productive Economic Power
 - No territorial expansion
 - Limits on Hebrew “ebed” servanthood (Lev.25)
 - Jubilee in Egypt vs. Israel
 - “After thirty years on the throne, the pharaoh celebrated a jubilee intended magically to rejuvenate the divine yet vulnerable monarch...”
 - From an ancient limestone with hieroglyphic carving from the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, Scenes from a King’s Thirty Year Jubilee, Dynasty 4, probably the reign of Snefru (ca. 2575 – 2551 B.C.).

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Structure of an Empire?

- Kingship and Military Power
 - Checks and balances
 - “Thus, scholars have identified the rule of law and the separation of powers – in particular, an independent judiciary – as the cornerstones of human civilization’s development over fifteen centuries towards constructing a society free from oppression and tyranny. Remarkably enough, Jewish law identified these very same elements more than three thousand years ago, when it was first revealed.”
 - Rabbi Dr. Warren Goldstein, *Defending the Human Spirit: Jewish Law’s Vision for a Moral Society* (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 2006), p.45.

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Structure of an Empire?

- Kingship and Military Power
 - Checks and balances
 - The king can be sued as a litigant in a civil case.
 - The king can be criminally prosecuted for any infraction of Jewish law.
 - Any executive order or legislative act of the monarchy that is in conflict with the dictates of the constitution and legal system of Jewish law is automatically void.
 - The king can be impeached by the Great Sanhedrin and removed from office.
 - Rabbi Dr. Warren Goldstein, *Defending the Human Spirit: Jewish Law's Vision for a Moral Society* (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 2006), p.50, 63.

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Structure of an Empire?

- Kingship and Military Power
 - Checks and balances
 - “Among Israel’s neighbors, kings had a sacral or even a divine status, putting them above accountability...”
 - Thomas L. Leclerc, *Introduction to the Prophets: Their Stories, Sayings, and Scrolls* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2004), p.73 – 74
 - “I have the absolute authority to do what I want with the Department of Justice.”
 - President Donald J. Trump, March 2018

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Structure of an Empire?

- Kingship and Military Power
 - Early warnings (Dt.17:14- 20)
 - Cannot take family lands
 - Cannot multiple wives
 - Must scribe the Torah/Pentateuch
 - God's delay in instituting the kingship
 - God's critique when instituted
 - Samuel: the reversal of the book of Genesis
 - Chronicles: David as "man of blood"
 - King as true Israelite: scribe and worship leader

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Preservation of the Old Testament

- Scripture as Medical-Spiritual Diagnosis: Goal
 - Not simply preservation of documents by a few
 - Maximum possible conviction
 - Future partners for Jesus
 - Jesus' ministry in Israel
 - Apostles' pattern of ministry
 - Synagogue outreach "to the Jew first" (Rom.1:16 – 17)
 - Speeches to synagogues are about fulfillment of Scripture (Acts)

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Preservation of the Old Testament

- Who preserved this? Who was invested?
 - Everyone: The “seed of the woman” prophecy
 - Israel: God’s choice of Abraham and Sarah (“election”)
 - Israel now vulnerable
 - Special groups: Levites? “School of the prophets”?
 - Judah in particular?
 - Compare Northern Kingdom and Samaria: Pentateuch only
 - Exile and Captivity
 - Second Temple Judaism
 - All Israel: hoping for restoration
 - Centered in: kingship, Jerusalem, worship, wisdom
 - Stretching to: creation, world
 - “People of the Land” to “people of the Book”

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Preservation of the Old Testament

- “People of the Book”
 - Torah/Pentateuch
 - The Five (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)
 - Nevi'im/Prophets
 - The Seven (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel)
 - The Book of the Twelve (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)
 - Ketuvim/Writings
 - Job, Psalms, Proverbs, The Five Scrolls (Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther), Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Preservation of the Old Testament

- “People of the Book”
 - Torah/Pentateuch
 - God’s speech-acts: God promises; people hope
 - Nevi’im/Prophets reflect on Pentateuch
 - Joshua meditated on “Moses”
 - Judges reversal of Genesis 2:4 – 4:26
 - Samuel reversal of Genesis; etc.
 - Ketuvim/Writings honor “the wise” hoping for new David
 - Love for God’s word (Ps.1, 119, etc.)
 - Love for God’s wisdom through parents (Prov.1:8)
 - Daniel reflected on Jeremiah

Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?

The Preservation of the Old Testament

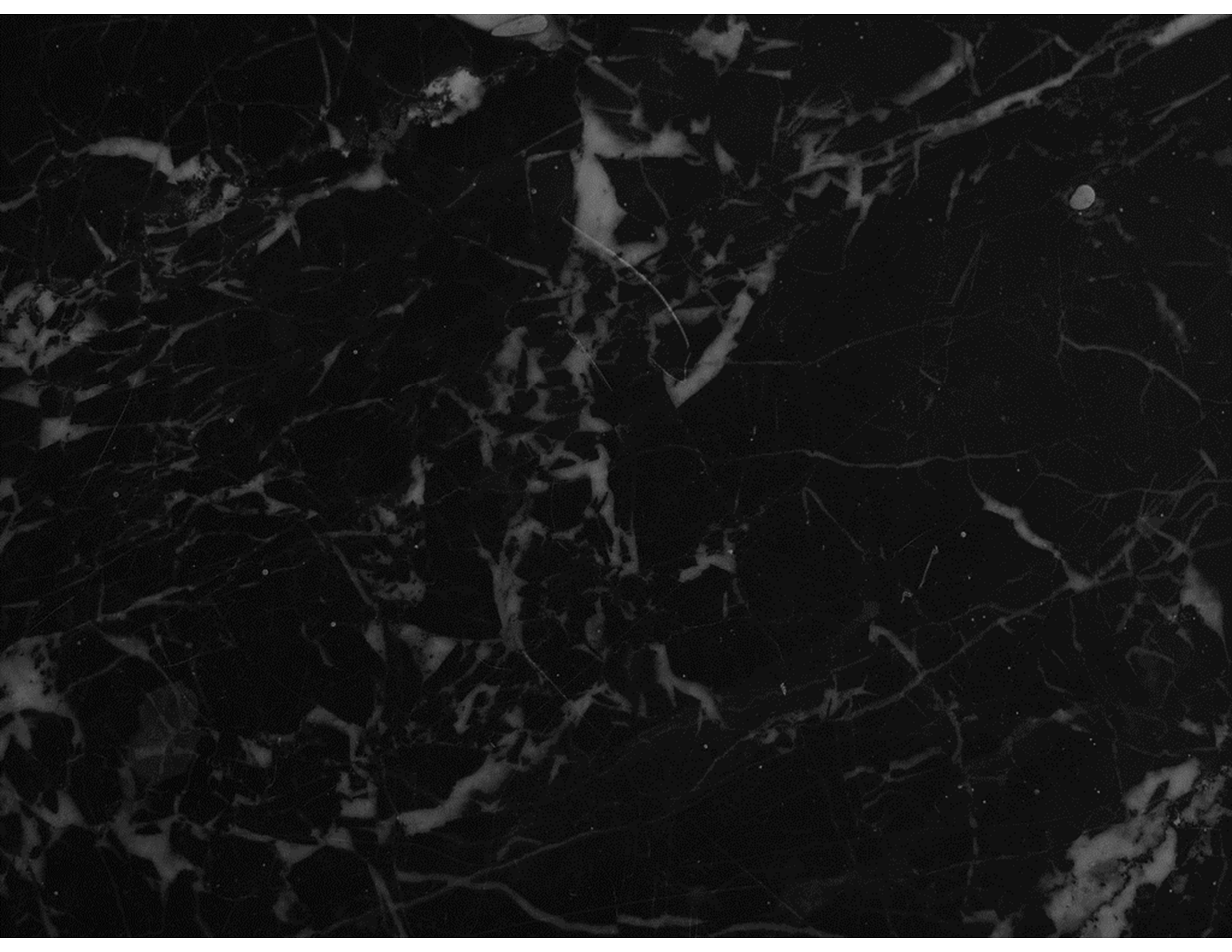
- “People of the Book”
 - Jesus the Messiah:
 - “The Scripture is fulfilled” and “filled to the full” (Mt, Lk.)
 - “You have heard that it was said... but I tell you” (Mt.5 – 7)
 - “The Scripture cannot be broken” (Jn.10)

Outline

- Introduction: The Many Uses of History (5 min)
- Israel: Justifications for Violence?
 - Before the Sinai Covenant
 - In the Sinai Covenant
- Israel: Empire or Anti-Empire?
 - The Structure of an Empire?
 - The Preservation of the Old Testament
- **The Canonization of the Old Testament**

The Canonization of the Old Testament

- Despite the Violence
 - The world threatening Israel
 - The violence within Israel
 - The simple people between the great river-empires
- Israel as Medical Focus Group (Clinic)
 - Rest of the world as uncooperative patient population
 - Israel as medical focus group
 - Israel must diagnose and document the disease
 - Israel must hope for the cure
 - Israel must invite the Canaanites into the group, as practice

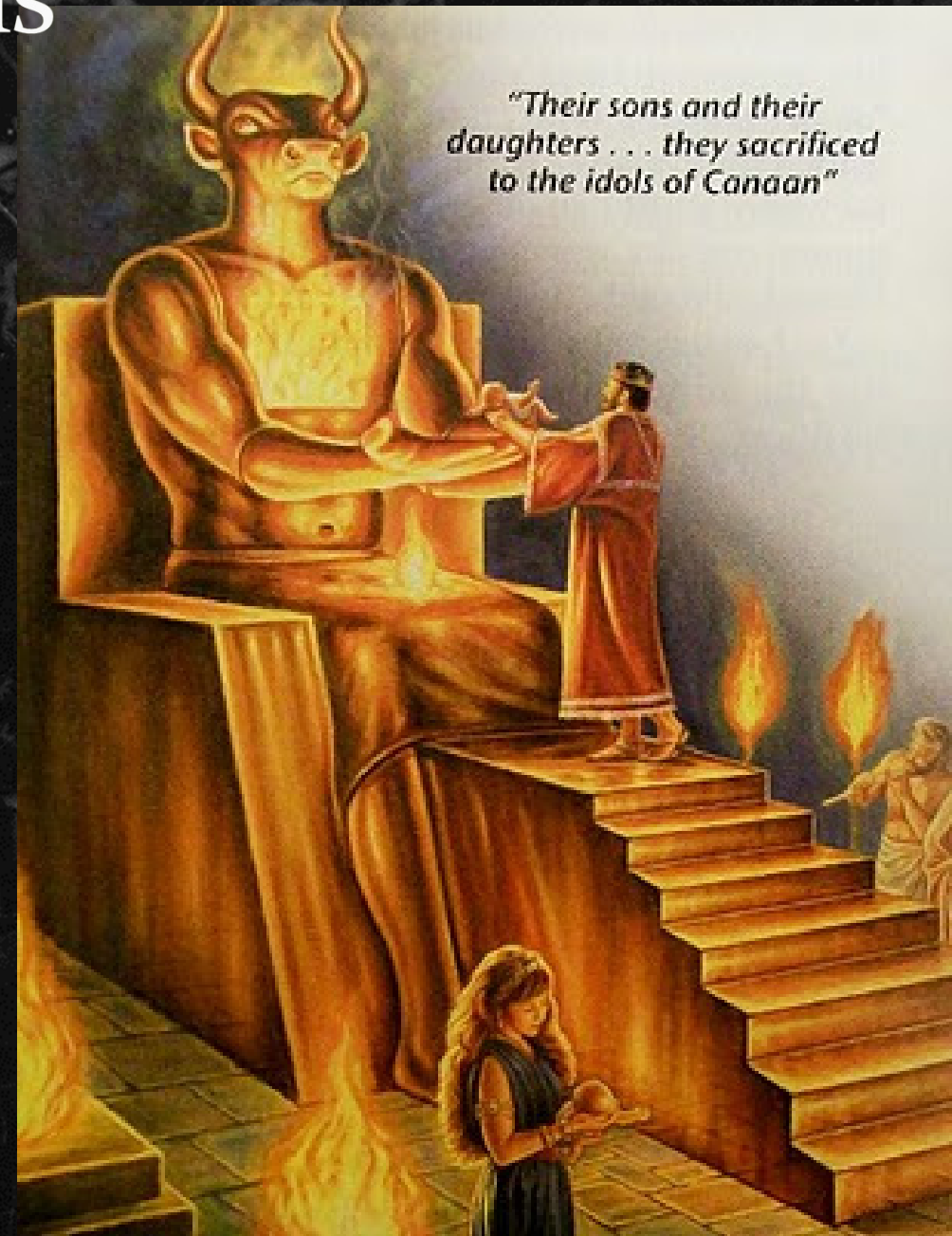


Appendices

- Appendix A: Canaanites and Child Sacrifice
- Appendix B: Canonization of the Old Testament, Detail

The Canaanites' Sins

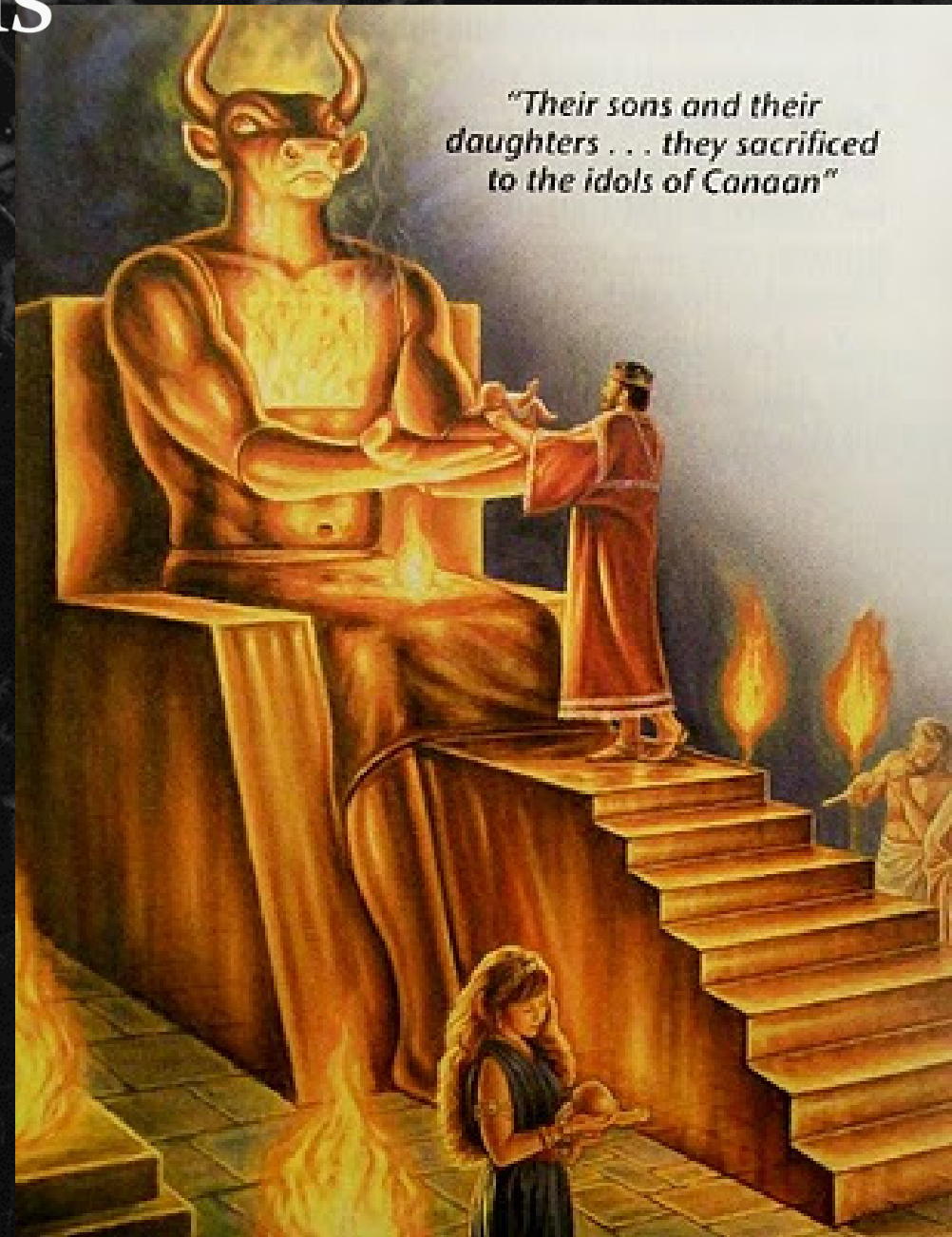
- Child sacrifice:
Archaeologists have found 6,000 jars of baby bones in Carthage, which was related to the Canaanites



"Their sons and their daughters . . . they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan"

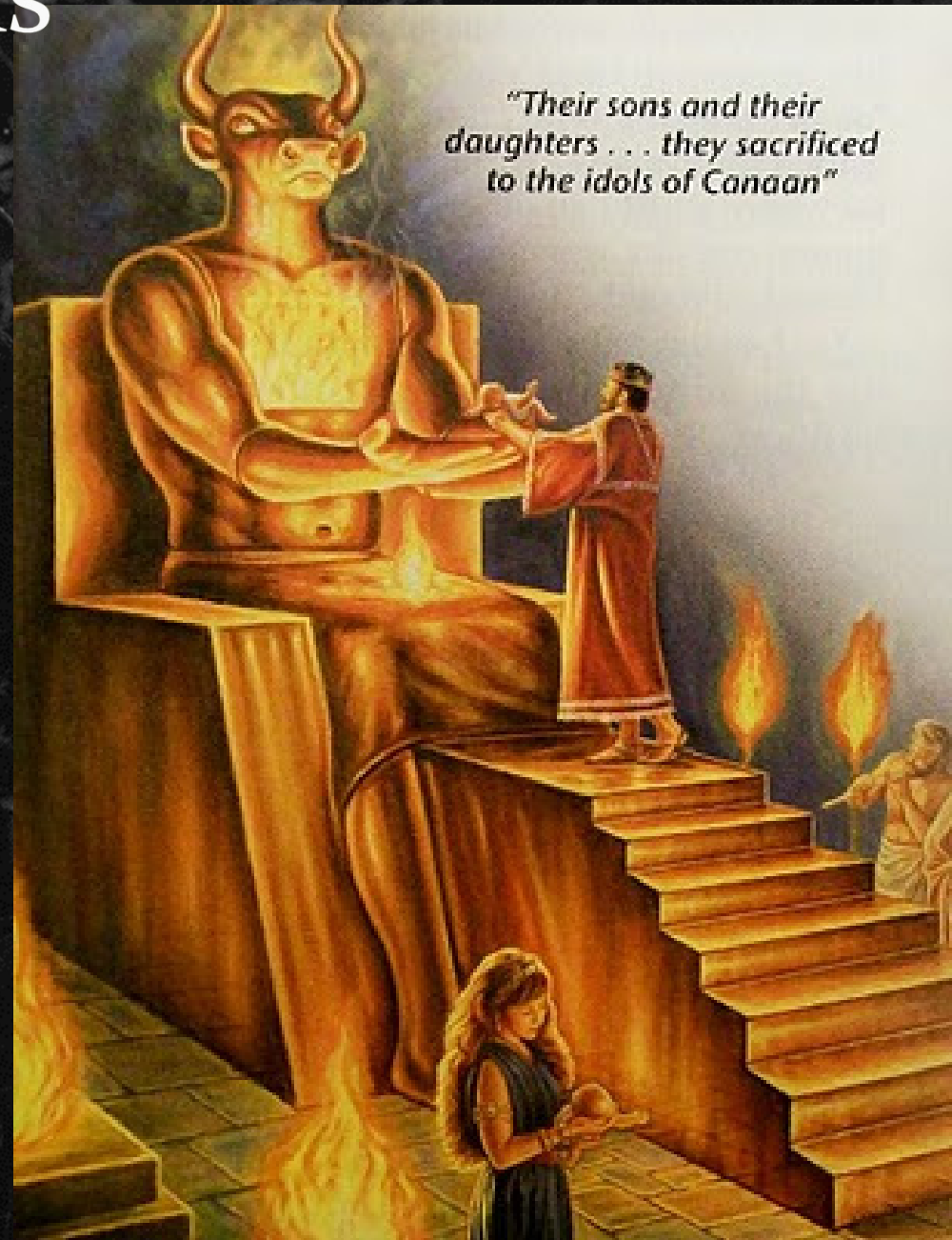
The Canaanites' Sins

- “The remains of Carthage amply demonstrate the importance of child sacrifice to its religion and culture and thus indirectly speak to the same institution on the Canaanite motherland. The archaeologists Lawrence E. Stager and Samuel R. Wolff have excavated an area in Carthage that is so full of



The Canaanites' Sins

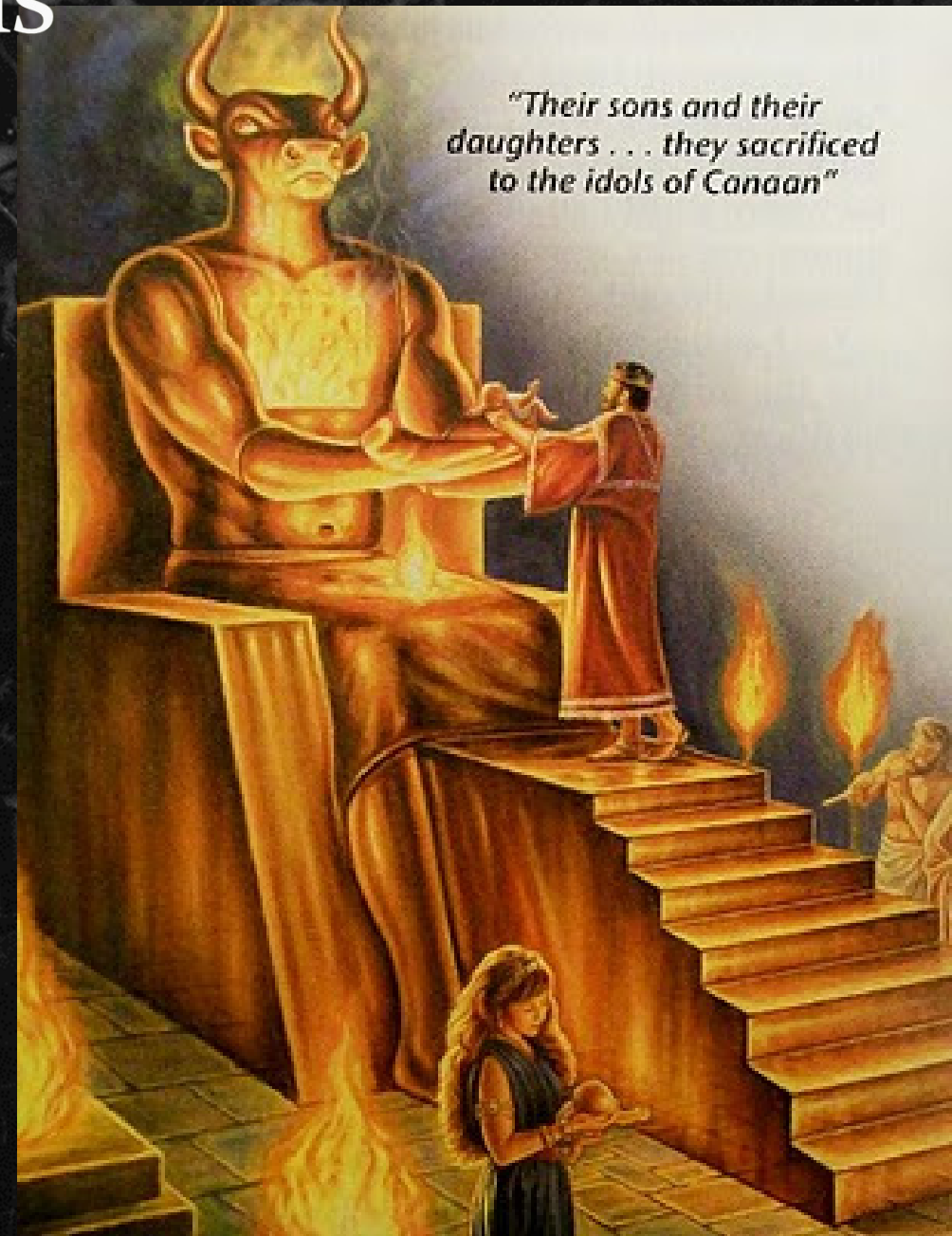
urns containing the charred remains of children that they term it the “Carthaginian Tophet.” This area occupies a minimum of 54,000 – 64,000 square feet (that is, between 1 ¼ and 1 ½ acres). On the basis of the density of those urns in the excavated area, Stager and Wolff estimate “that as many as 20,000 urns may



“Their sons and their daughters . . . they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan”

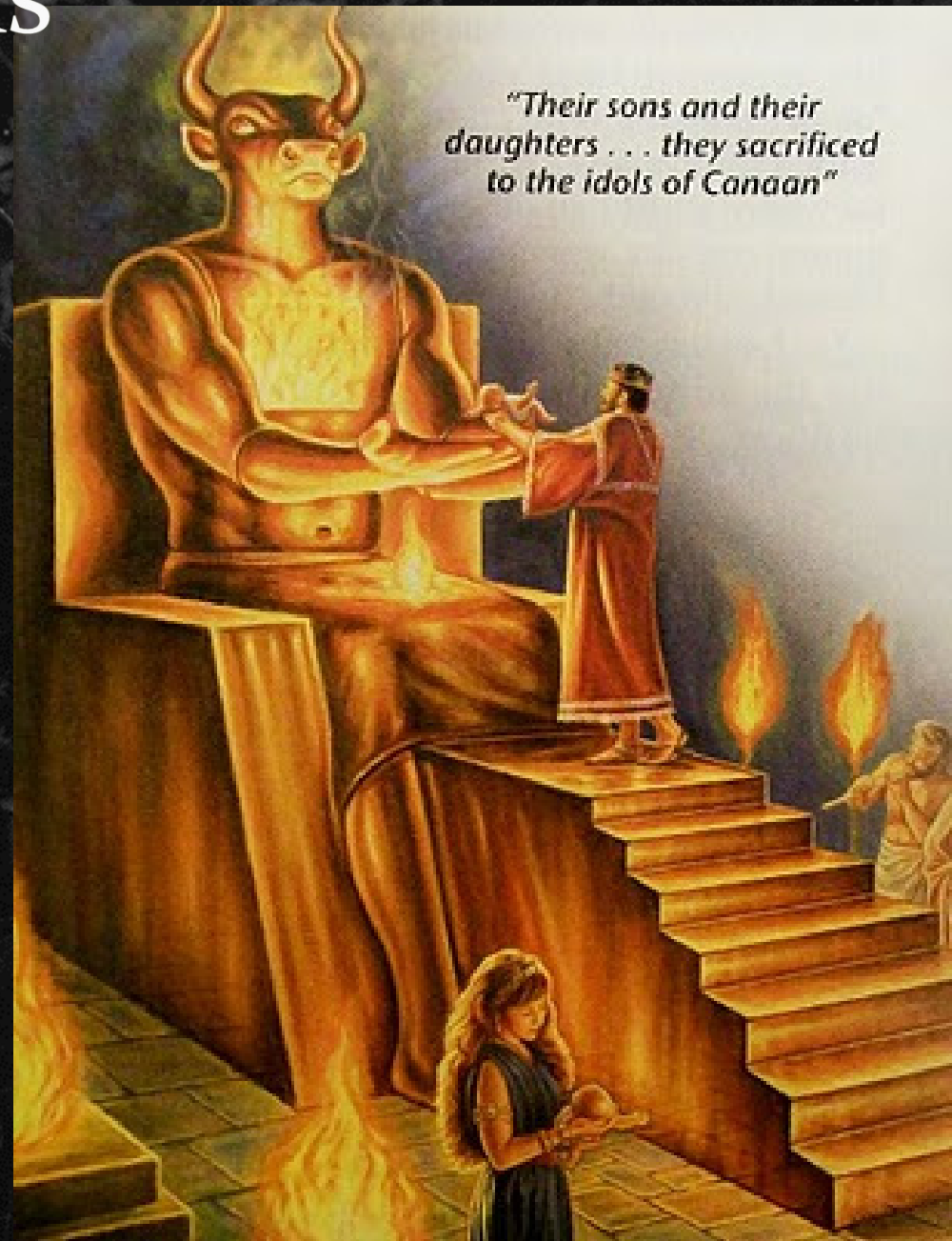
The Canaanites' Sins

have been deposited there between 400 and 200 B.C.," "average[ing] out at 100 urn deposits per year or slightly fewer than one every three days." Against this, some argue that these mute remains suggest that the children in these urns died of natural causes and that the urns testify to Carthaginian funerary practices rather than to a



The Canaanites' Sins

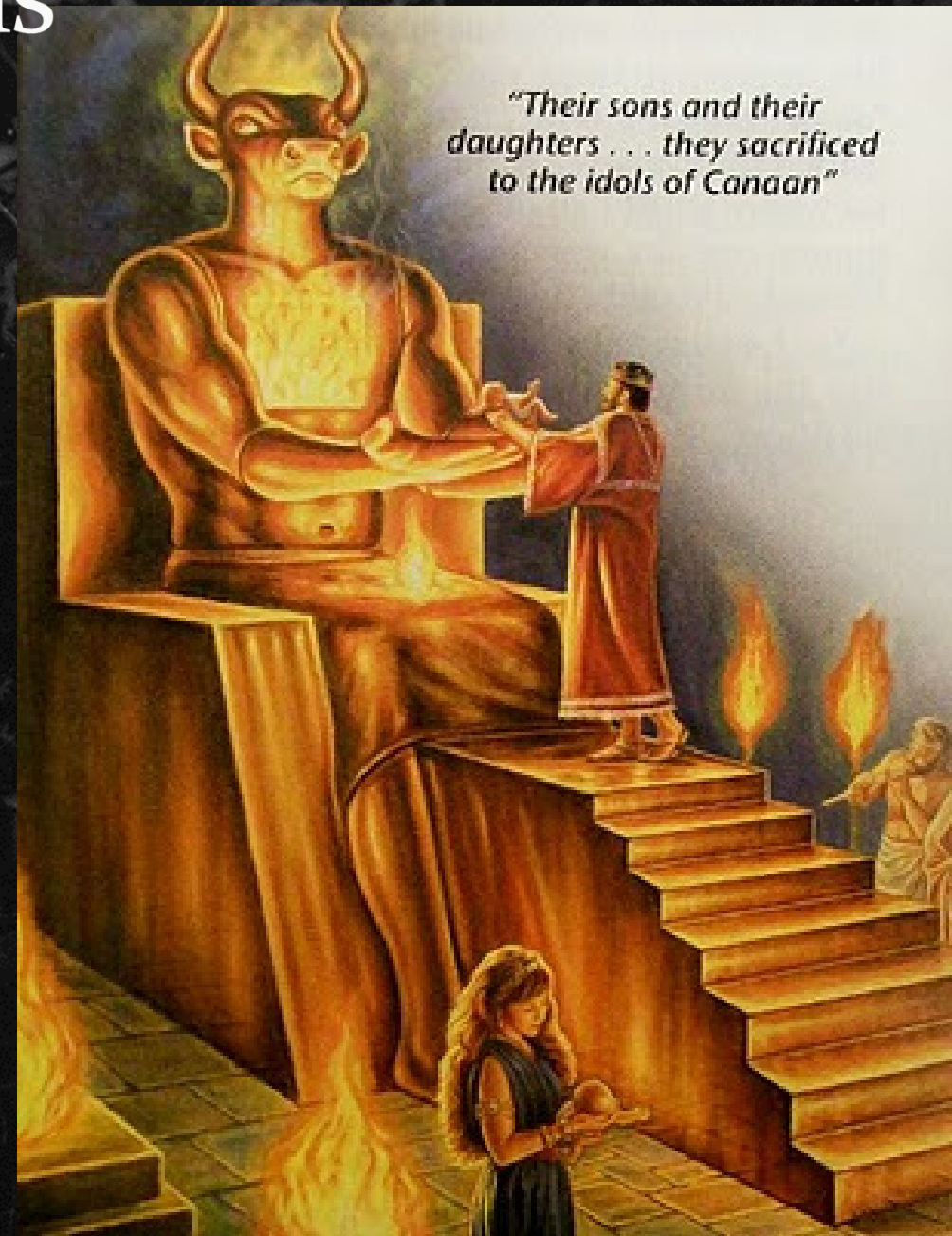
cult of child sacrifice. But Stager and Wolff correctly counter that the actual contents of the urns tell a different and more horrific story. For in them they found usually not one but two children, one a newborn and the other of two or four years of age. “It seems unlikely,” Stager and Wolff write, “that disease or some other disaster would



“Their sons and their daughters . . . they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan”

The Canaanites' Sins

have affected only the two youngest children...from the same family in such a regular fashion.” Moreover, in the same area that they call the Tophet, Stager and Wolff also found urns containing the charred bones of animals. “Should we conclude,” they ask, “that the Tophet was also a ‘pet cemetery’ with cremated lambs and kids?”

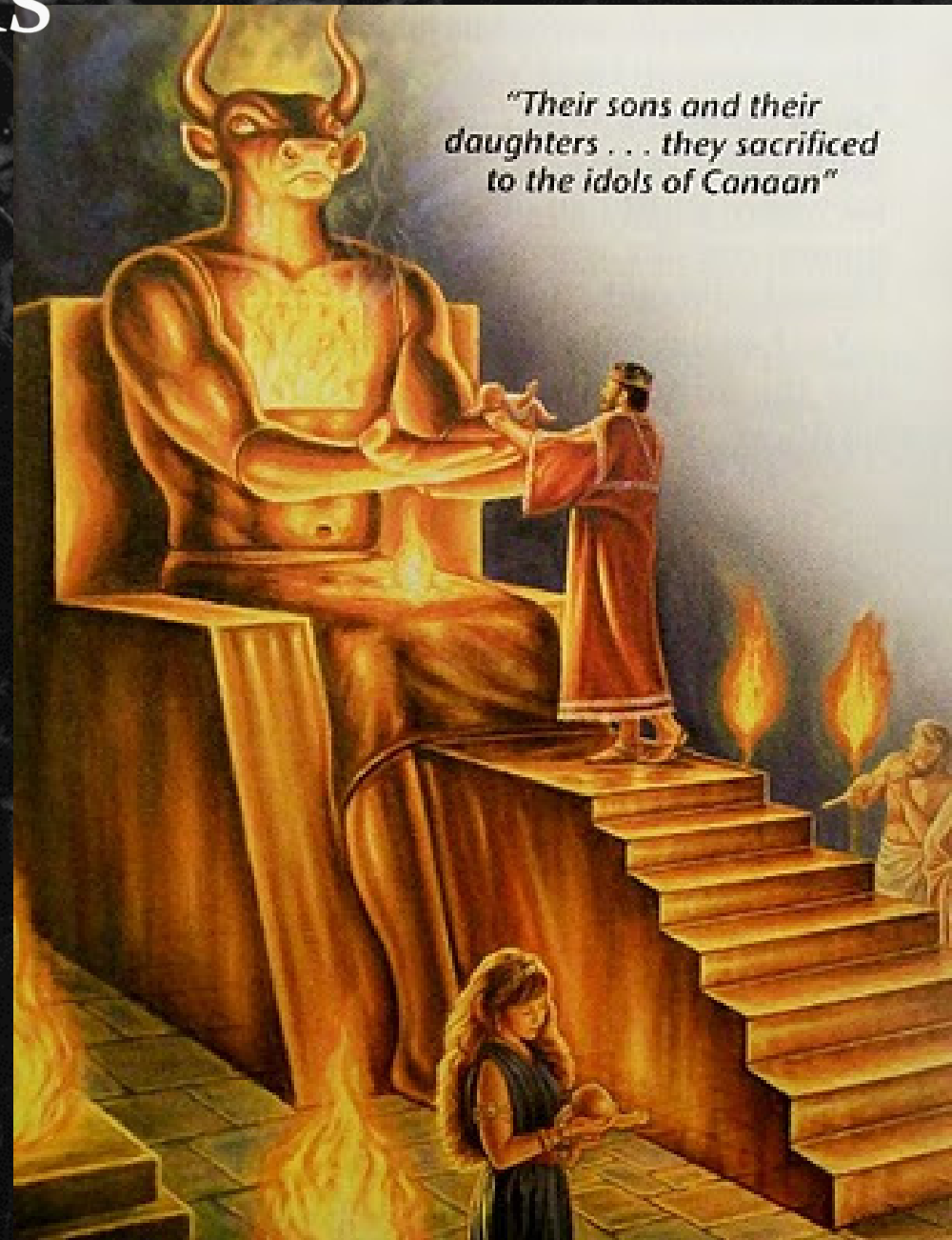


“Their sons and their daughters . . . they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan”

The Canaanites' Sins

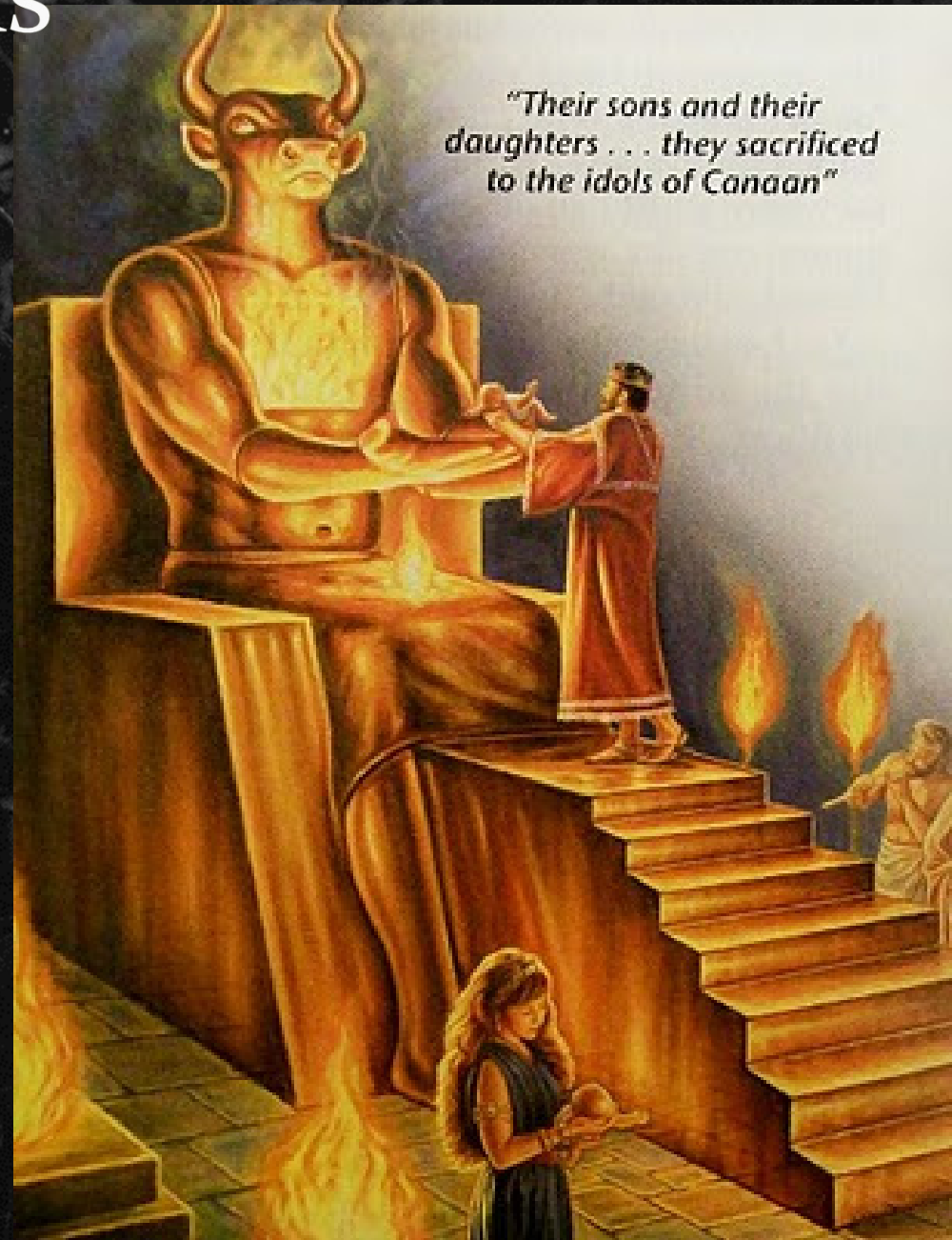
Instead, they opt for what is surely the more likely reconstruction, “that the burned animals were intended as substitute sacrifices for children.””

Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity*, p.21



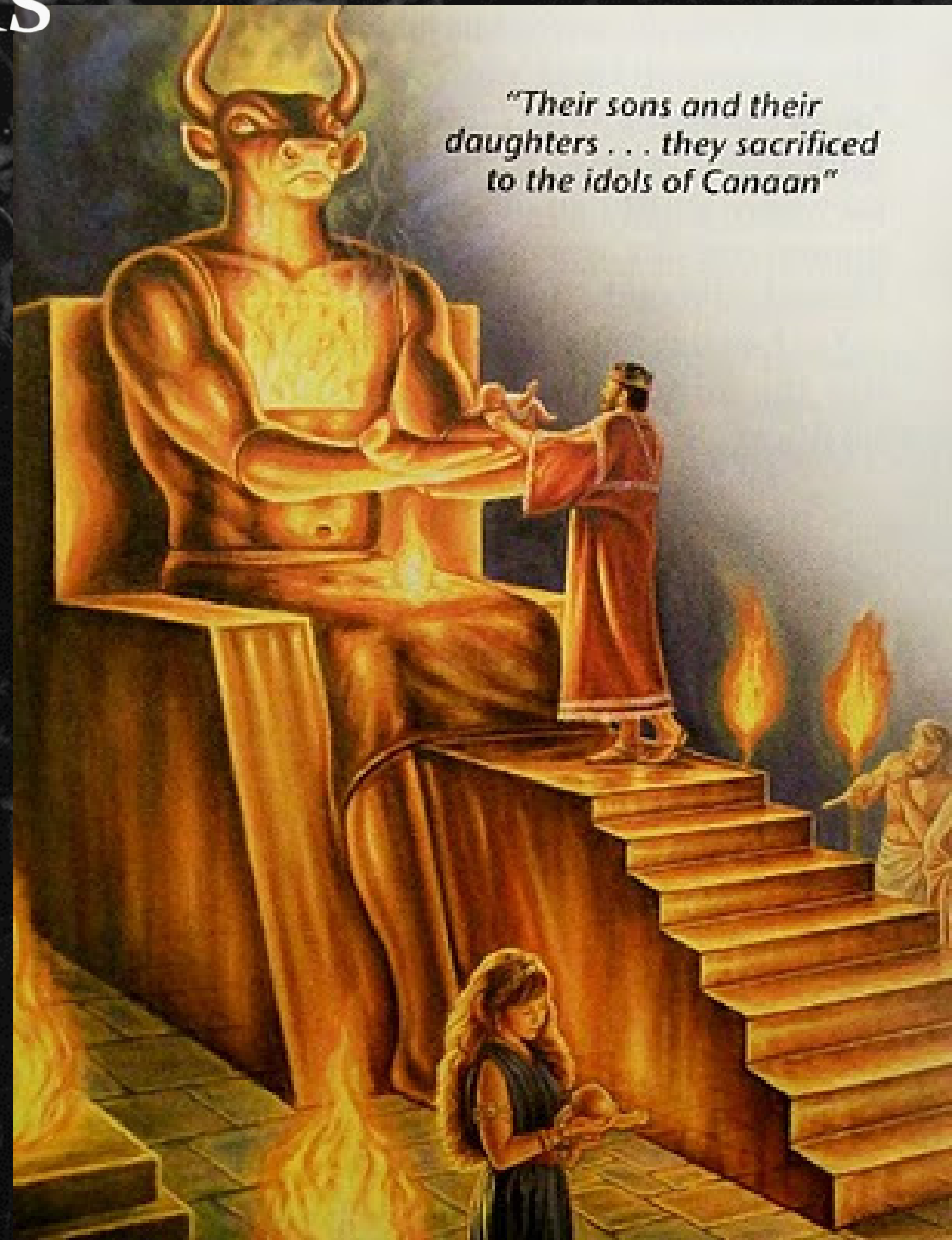
The Canaanites' Sins

- Archaeologists have found 6,000 jars of baby bones in Carthage, which was related to the Canaanites
- **Literary evidence: Greco-Roman, rabbinical, biblical**



The Canaanites' Sins

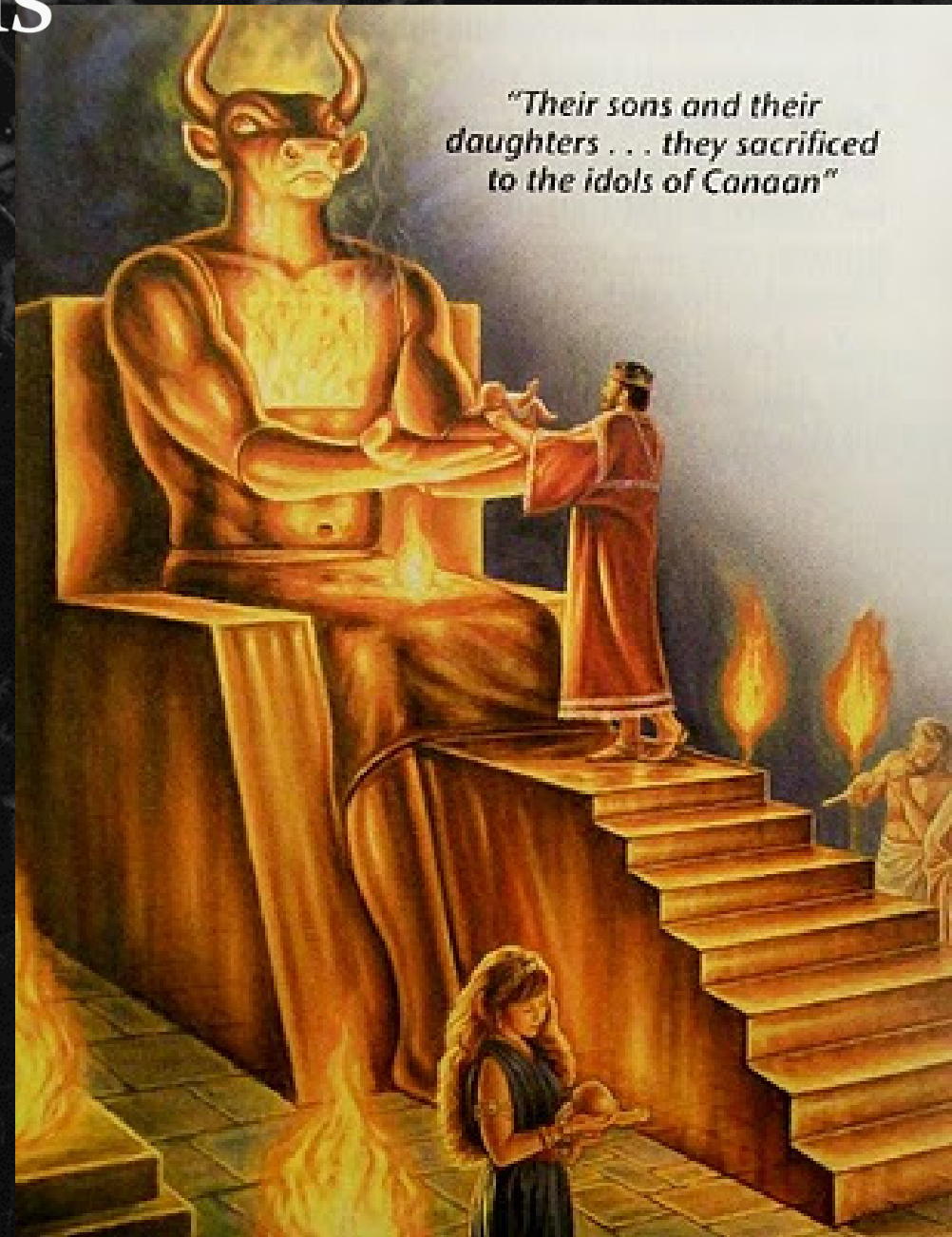
- [Greco-Roman] Diodorus Siculus (wrote between 60 – 30 BC) mentions the practice in Carthage, as do Plutarch (c.46 – 20 AD), Tertullian (160 – 225 AD), and Orosius (c.375 – 423 AD). Some of these sources indicate babies roasted to death on a heated bronze statue.



"Their sons and their daughters . . . they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan"

The Canaanites' Sins

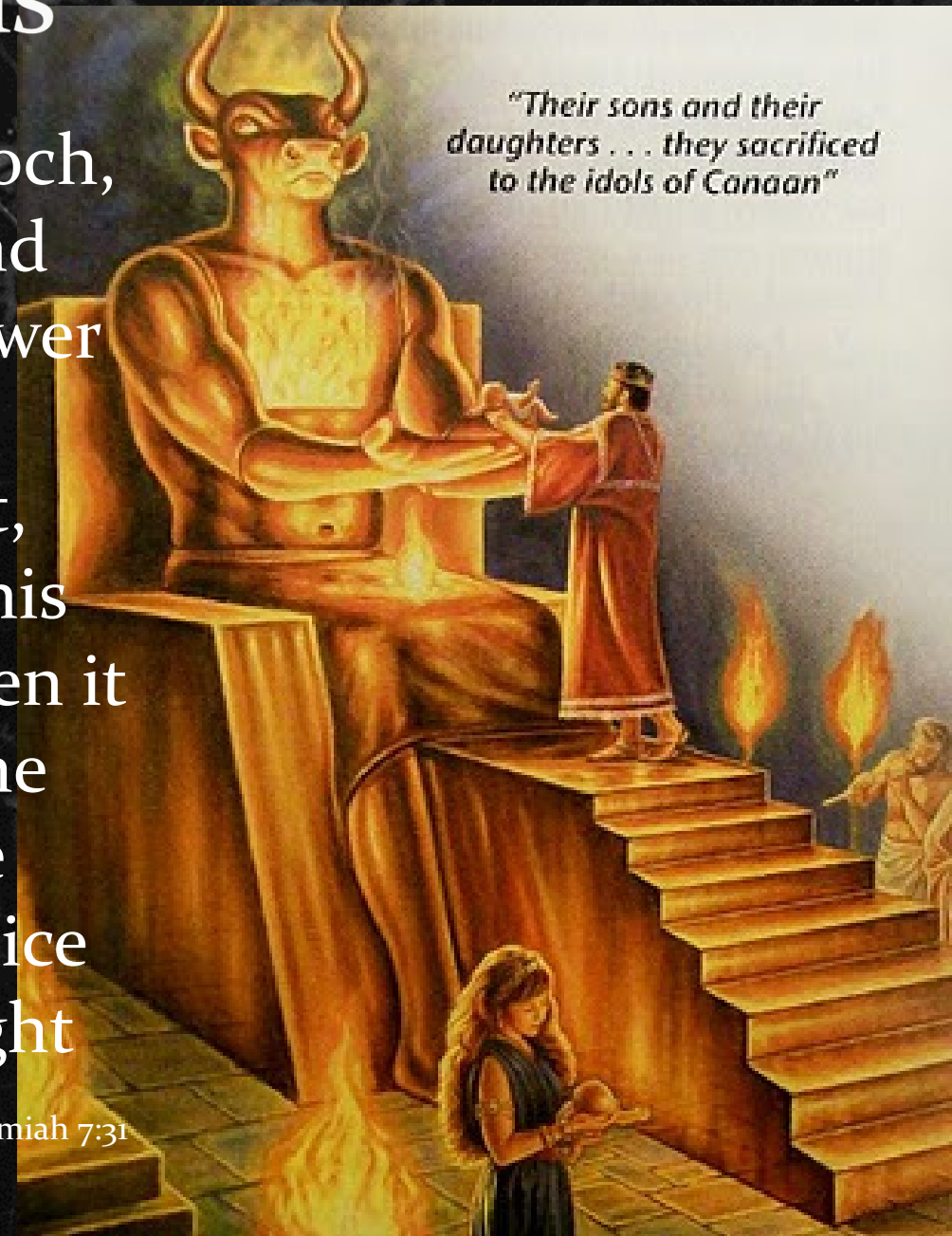
- [Greco-Roman] Diodorus Siculus wrote between 60 – 30 BC, “There was in their city a bronze image of Cronus extending its hands, palms up and sloping toward the ground, so that each of the children when placed thereon rolled down and fell into a sort of gaping pit filled with fire.”



“Their sons and their daughters . . . they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan”

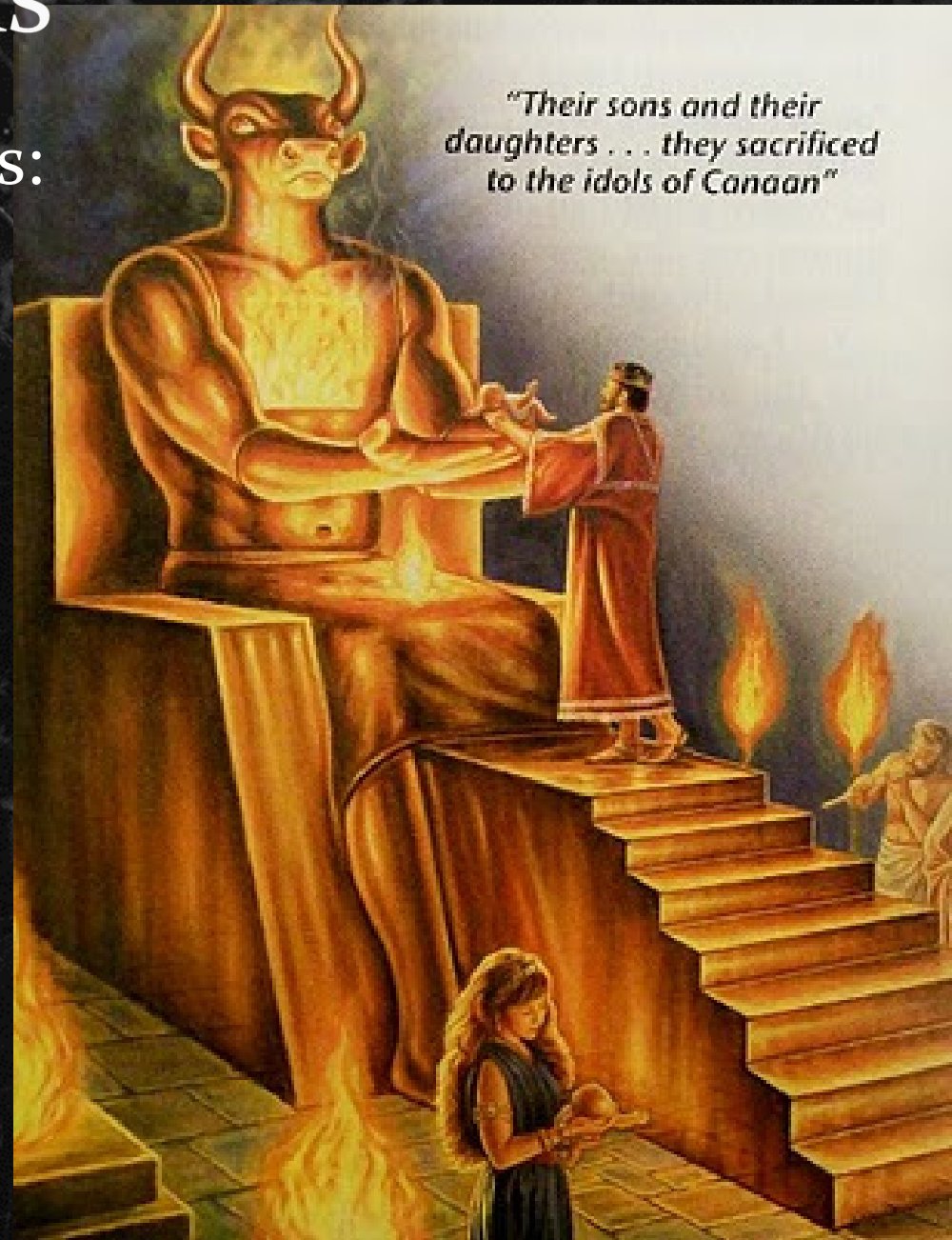
The Canaanites' Sins

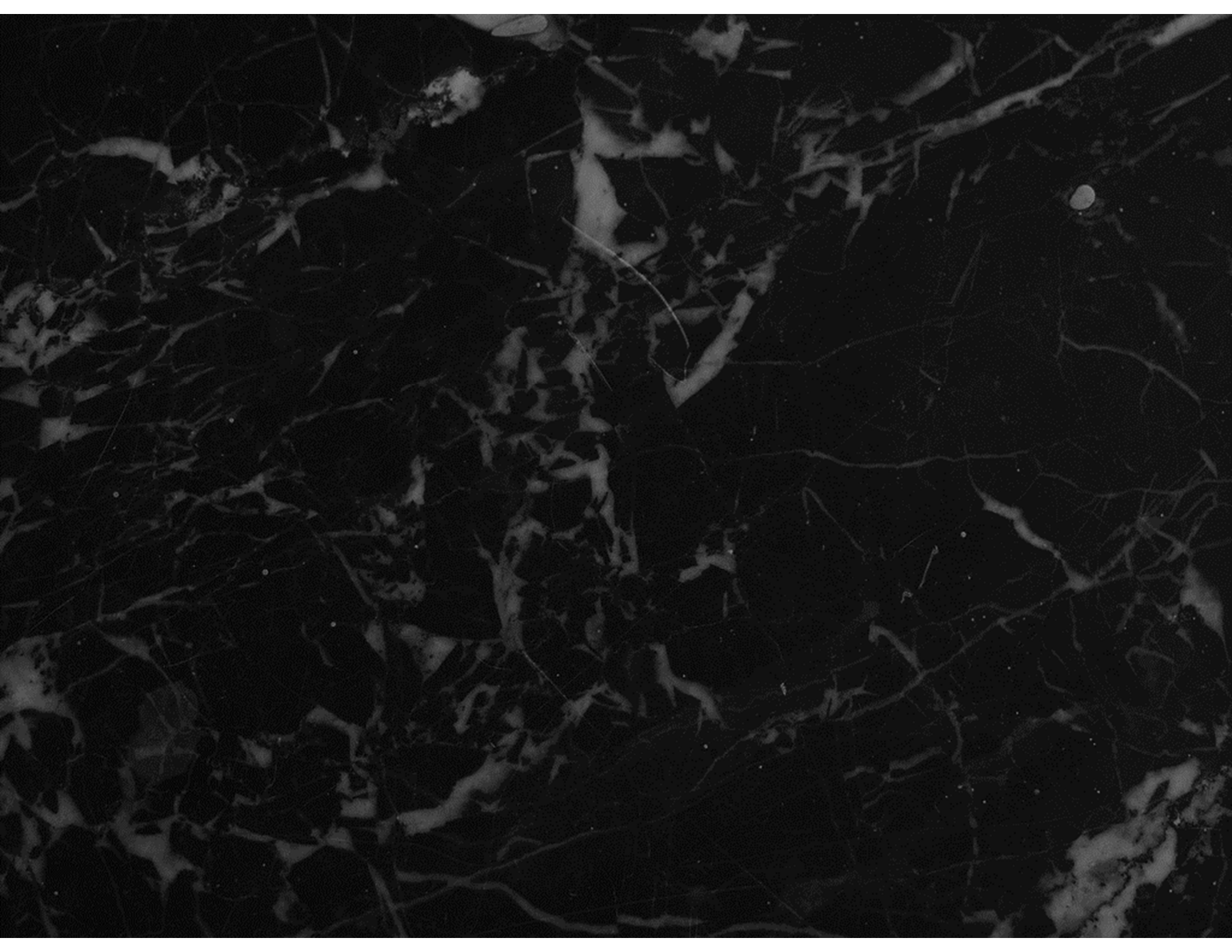
- [Rabbinical] “Tophet is Moloch, which was made of brass; and they heated him from his lower parts; and his hands being stretched out, and made hot, they put the child between his hands, and it was burnt; when it vehemently cried out; but the priests beat a drum, that the father might not hear the voice of his son, and his heart might not be moved.” (Rashi, 12th century, on Jeremiah 7:31)



The Canaanites' Sins

- [Biblical] Scripture mentions:
 - (Genesis 4:16 – 26)
 - Genesis 22
 - Leviticus 18:21
 - 1 Kings 16:34
 - 2 Kings 3:27
 - Micah 6:7





The Canonization of the Old Testament

- How Could God Persuade the Israelites?
 - God incentivized participation
 - God promised children, land, blessing, peace
 - Israel's human motivations broadened and deepened
 - God localized His presence, purified Israel
 - God sweetened the most difficult pills
 - God's word is sweet, then bitter, then sweet again
 - Daniel:
 - Son of Man's victory over the Beastly Empires (Dan.7:1 – 14)
 - Destruction of the Jerusalem temple (Dan.9:26)??
 - Isaiah:
 - God will restore Israel from the Gentiles
 - Israel has a mission to the Gentiles (Isa.2:1 – 4; etc.)??

The Canonization of the Old Testament

- Liberal-Skeptical Biblical Scholarship
 - Books were composed later than traditional earlier dates?
 - Explain away the miracle of prophecy
 - Creates an unexplained miracle of reception
 - Example: Daniel
 - Miracle of prophesy: Vision of the four Gentile Empires
 - Traditional earlier date: 6th century BCE
 - Later date: 2nd century BCE
 - Miracle of reception in 2nd century BCE?
 - 1 – 2 Maccabees: retake Jerusalem, die for Torah and temple
 - Daniel: city and temple will be destroyed (9:26)
 - People are supposed to welcome this?

The Canonization of the Old Testament

- How Could God Persuade the Israelites?
 - Literary beauty and internal consistency: Israel's failure
 - Joshua 24: “you are not able to serve the Lord” (24:19)
 - Judges 21: “everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (21:25)
 - 2 Samuel 24: “I have sinned greatly” (24:10, 17)
 - 2 Kings 25: The King of Judah is in Babylon (25:27 – 30)
 - Isaiah 1 – 6: “The holy seed is its stump” (6:13)
 - Jeremiah 1 – 9: “uncircumcised in heart” (9:26)
 - Ezekiel 1 – 11: “the glory of God went... to the exiles” (11:22 – 25)

The Canonization of the Old Testament

- How Could God Persuade the Israelites?
 - Literary beauty and internal consistency: creation to new creation (resurrection)
 - Isaiah
 - From “heaven and earth” (1:2) to “new heaven and new earth” (65:17 – 66:24)
 - Creation garden (58:11 – 12) and resurrection (25:7 – 8; 53:12)
 - God’s refining fire (1:25; 4:4 – 5; 6:5 – 7)
 - Child of promise, seed of the woman prophecy (7:14),
Servant, reconstituting of Israel
 - Inclusion of Gentiles (56:1 – 8) instead of Mosaic limits (Dt.23:1 – 8)
 - Isaiah **depends literarily** on Genesis and Torah/Pentateuch

The Canonization of the Old Testament

- How Could God Persuade the Israelites?
 - Literary beauty and internal consistency: creation to new creation (resurrection)
 - Ezekiel
 - “New temple” overflowing with water (Ezk40 – 47)
 - Depends on Genesis 2:4 – 10
 - “Built Jubilee” with dimensions of 50 cubits (Ezk.40, 42, 45)
 - Depends on jubilee year every 50 years in Leviticus 25
 - “New heart, Spirit” (Ezk.11:18; 36:26 – 36) and “Spirit-resurrection” (Ezk.37)
 - Depends on Genesis 1 – 2, 6, and Deuteronomy 6, 10, 30
 - Ezekiel **depends literarily** on Torah/Pentateuch

The Canonization of the Old Testament

- How Could God Persuade the Israelites?
 - Literary beauty and internal consistency: creation to new creation (resurrection)
 - Daniel
 - Beastly empires vs. Son of Man
 - Son of Man triumphs over lion (Dan.7:4), bear (7:5), leopard (7:6), and a fourth beast with ten horns (7:7)
 - Resurrection from the dust (Dan.12:2; Gen.2:7)
 - Daniel **depends literarily** on
 - Genesis: At least Genesis 1 – 4
 - Samuel: David triumphed over lions and bears (1 Sam.17:34 – 36)

The Canonization of the Old Testament

- How Could God Persuade the Israelites?
 - Literary structures and linkages: other major themes
 - Samuel depends on Genesis
 - Elkanah and Hannah **reverse** Abraham and Sarah
 - “Fathers curse sons” **reverses** “fathers eventually bless sons”
 - Institutional settledness **reverses** pilgrimage
 - Story of Tamar (2 Sam.13) **reverses** the story of Joseph (Gen.37 – 50)
 - Family united
 - “Send everyone out from me” (2 Sam.13:9; Gen.45:1)
 - “Come, lie with me” (2 Sam.13:11; Gen.39:7)
 - “Coat of many colors” torn (2 Sam.13:18; Gen.37:3, 31 – 33)
 - Family divided, unity shattered (2 Sam.13:20 – 22; Gen.37:1 – 4)

The Canonization of the Old Testament

- Liberal-Skeptical Biblical Scholarship
 - Were books composed later than the traditional earlier dates?
 - Example: Genesis and Torah/Pentateuch
 - Traditional earlier date: 12th century BCE, during Moses
 - Later date: 5th century BCE, during Babylonian Exile
 - Skeptics see the anticipations of exile as the result of exile:
 - Babel (Gen.11) is Babylon
 - Unify the tribes (Gen.37 – 50)
 - Kingly line from Judah (Gen.49:8 – 12)
 - Exile is because of your disobedience (Dt.27 – 28)
 - Claim the garden land (Gen.12 – 22; Dt.30off)

The Canonization of the Old Testament

- Liberal-Skeptical Biblical Scholarship
 - Was Genesis written after Samuel?
 - Samuel depends on Genesis
 - Samuel depends on Genesis literarily
 - Samuel's critique depends on pre-existing, widespread, popular knowledge of Genesis
 - E.g. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "All men are created equal" in his *I Have a Dream* speech
 - Precursors: Abraham Lincoln, U.S. Declaration of Independence
 - Broad community familiarity with
 - Could this be a historical retrofit and manipulated memory?

The Canonization of the Old Testament

- Liberal-Skeptical Biblical Scholarship
 - When was Samuel written?
 - Internal evidence:
 - Book of Samuel appears contemporaneous with the elderly David
 - Samuel **criticizes** David, dynastic monarchy, temple
 - Divided Kingdom pre-Exile? 721 – 586 BCE
 - Southern Kingdom: pro-David, pro-Jerusalem
 - Northern Kingdom: anti-David, anti-Jerusalem
 - External evidence:
 - Later, Samaritans held the Samaritan Pentateuch but not Samuel
 - Why receive Genesis and not Samuel?
 - The Exile and/or Second Temple Judaism? 586 BCE – 70 CE
 - Pro-Davidic, pro-temple
 - Emotional force goes in the opposite direction

The Canonization of the Old Testament

- Liberal-Skeptical Biblical Scholarship
 - Reasons Genesis written before Samuel
 - Samuel depends literarily on Genesis
 - Samuel depends on pre-existing communal understanding of Genesis
 - Genesis was held by the Samaritans, who rejected Samuel
 - Dating of Samuel?
 - Long before the Babylonian Exile (586 BCE)
 - Near the end of King David's life (~970 BCE)
 - Dating of Genesis
 - *Long before* the Book of Samuel
 - Also before the Book of Judges
 - E.g. The character Samuel is patterned after the prophetess Deborah in Judges 4 – 5

The Canonization of the Old Testament

- Liberal-Skeptical Biblical Scholarship
 - Books were composed later than the traditional earlier dates?
 - Attempts to explain away
 - The prophecies of foreknowing in advance
 - The literary dependencies
 - Creates unexplained miracles
 - Emotional stances that do not fit a later time period
 - Apparent emotional resonance with audience based on shared literary precursors
 - Sudden and sufficient popular support in the community
 - Reverse engineering all the literature – how exactly?

The Canonization of the Old Testament

- How Could God Persuade the Israelites?
 - Literary structures and linkages: other major themes
 - E.g. Patterns of garden, exile, restoration
 - Within a book
 - Judges: spiritual decline, like Genesis 2:4 – 4:26
 - Samuel: reversal of Genesis 12 – 50
 - Psalms: “tree” and “Son” in Psalms 1 – 2; “breath” in Psalm 150
 - Across multiple books
 - Seven Major Prophets
 - (first) Joshua: Inheriting the garden land
 - [... failure, exile, need for new heart, Spirit]
 - (seventh) Ezekiel: Longing for the return to the garden land
 - Across the entire canon

The Canonization of the Old Testament

- How Could God Persuade the Israelites?
 - Literary structures and linkages: massive structural connections
 - Seven Major Prophets: seven days; new creation, new Eden
 - Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets: twelve tribes; world
 - Book of Psalms: five “books” for Davidic covenant, like Torah
 - Book of Proverbs: ten frames, like ten declarations in Gen.1
 - Five Scrolls: five “books” of “wisdom,” like Torah
 - Ruth: hope in David’s line; seed of the Gentile convert woman!
 - Song of Songs: celebration of marriage
 - Ecclesiastes: vanity, purpose found in worship at temple
 - Lamentations: mortality, lament
 - Esther: God preserves His people through exile

The Canonization of the Old Testament

- Canonization as Accomplishment
 - Of Israel
 - Human communal skills required to write literature, hear it, and be convicted by it
 - Even when Israel paganized because of fear and greed
 - Of God
 - Subverted pagan institutions taken into Israel's fabric
 - Incentivized preservation of literature, personal and community buy-in, and hope for the Messiah-cure
 - Explicit Critique of Empire in Israel and the World
 - A vision to be applied by Jesus and Christians
 - See Reconstruction 2022, Session 7: Politics, the Church, and Jesus' Restorative Justice