

Is the Church Weeping for Tammuz, the Babylonian God of Worldly Desire?

Editor's Note: The following is an extrapolation of what I published in 1990. Do take some devotion time to process and pray, then join in agreement for us as the church to come to a renewed commitment to God's Word, Love for His Truths and His Purposes. May our knee posture in humility help us to recognize how far we have digressed, and through honest reflection may we come to repentance for a needed refreshing in and through our lives.

Ezekiel 8:14-15

"Then He brought me to the door of the gate of the house of the Lord which was toward the north. And women sat there weeping for Tammuz. Then He said to me, 'Have you seen this, O son of man? Yet again you shall see greater abominations than these.'"

The Compromised Walk

There is a significant progression here that we need to look at. Notice the recurring phrase—"greater abominations"—in verses 6, 13 and 15. The Lord is showing us the natural progression of the effects of sin in our lives. Each sin leads to greater abominations.

As stated before, the compromised walk is a gradual process—it doesn't happen all at once. The Lord shows us how this occurs. For example, sin begins in the heart. It is called iniquity. In this case, the house of Israel had replaced their affections for the Lord and His righteousness with the idolatrous affections of the world—a world that had no concept of judgment against sin.

We must be ever alert to guard the possible points of entry for sin in our lives. When the door is left even slightly ajar, sin can begin to get a foothold. Even as Christians we are confronted with various points of entry for sin in our lives. As we give into smaller temptations, they will lead us into greater sins. We have only to remind ourselves of the downfall of well-known ministers in past years to know how this can occur.

In my own life, I have been faced with many decisions. One of great importance is the realm of choosing how I am going to spend my time. Whenever I've sacrificed my personal time with the Lord, I gradually lose my ability to hear His voice. The resulting condition is an inability to know His will in any given circumstances.

It is easy to rationalize our behavior and our choices. Most of us can justify our choices with relative ease that may even be convincing to others and ourselves. We far too frequently fail to see that our wrong choices evolve into compromise. Such compromising ultimately leads us into a place of bondage—to a return to Egypt where we can go back to making bricks for Pharaoh instead of enjoying the land of plenty.

In verse 6 God said, "Now turn again, and you shall see greater abominations." The house of Israel pushed the Lord out of His sanctuary through the spiritual adultery that was in their hearts. With the Lord removed, their sanctuary became a spiritual vacuum. So in verses 7 through 12, we see them refilling the sanctuary of their hearts and minds. This is an inward manifestation of the physical image of jealousy that Israel raised up in the house of God. They are now embellishing this idol as they fill their sanctuary with all manners of filth, uncleanness, and impure thoughts and desires. Now begins the visible stages of the compromised walk, the first of which is hypocrisy. What began in the heart becomes only a form of godliness. That which is done in secret will now be known outwardly.

Hypocrisy

The church is continuing the pretense of prayer and right relationship with God (verses 11 and 12) while engaging in all manner of wickedness. Hypocrisy! The fact that they were doing these things in secret is evidence that the children of Israel knew what they were doing was wrong. God's people willfully chose to rebel against their Creator.

Rebellion Against God

In verse 14 we see that the final stages of rebellion against God—the people of God weeping for Tammuz, the Babylonian god of worldly desire. The heart continues to be deceived and hardened through hypocrisy and begins to make a more outward show of its affection. With this outward show of affection, open rebellion against God is not too far behind.

The worship of Tammuz was connected with licentiousness, partying, or orgy-type festivals. Licentiousness means loose, lustful or lawless behavior, especially in sexual behavior. The people of God were weeping for this personification of worldly desire. They had exalted this desire to the place of the godhead within their hearts. Deep down, they wanted to be lustful, to be loose and lawless of the spirit. They also knew that this heart attitude offended a holy God.

The people of God wanted the world and at the same time they wanted to worship in the house of God. Since they couldn't have it both ways, they had to make a choice. This choice tore apart their souls and left them weeping for their god, Tammuz.

Weeping for Tammuz

How many of us weep for Tammuz in the very same way? We are serving God while our souls are literally torn apart by the lusts of this world. How many of us actually desire to be loose, lawless and lustful of spirit, deep down in our hearts? Is God well-pleased with such a heart? Of course not! If the

desire is there, then there is an idol in our heart that needs to be utterly destroyed. That idol of sin needs to be placed at the foot of the cross and left there.

If our minds are not totally subjected to the Holy Spirit, and if our hearts are not totally given to God and set apart for His use, then be assured that we will fall prey to the spirit of this age—that licentious worship of worldly desire. Now more than ever we need to understand that we are in a presence of a jealous God. If we do not want to be vomited up and suffer His loving wrath, we had better sell out and live in one world—His world.

How many of us have loved the Lord in the past but have become seduced by this world? This happened because of the idolatry in our hearts. How many of us had to hit rock bottom before we realized the lukewarm state of our relationship with Him? But God did not forsake us, as we all tend to think at times. We forsook Him, and He allows His righteous judgment to come because of His boundless love toward us. He eagerly wants us to be brought back into that intimate relationship with him.
{eoa}

Dr. J. Doug Stringer *is founder and president of Turning Point Ministries International, which birthed an international movement known as Somebody Cares, a network of organizations impacting their communities through unified grassroots efforts. Doug began identifying community needs through his work in the inner-city of Houston, Texas in 1981.*