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PREACHING ANOTHER JESUS

Paul warned early Christians some were preaching “another Jesus whom we have not preached” (2Cor. 11:2-4). Today many are not preaching the whole truth from God’s word concerning Jesus. Please consider how some are preaching “another Jesus” today. 1) Preach the baby Jesus without the Lord Jesus. Many pay homage to a Jesus that remains a plastic baby. He never speaks, he never acts, he never commands, he never demands, he remains passive and silent. This is the kind of Jesus they desire to “serve.” The real Jesus did not remain a baby in a manger. He grew up, taught us the truth, was crucified for our sins, ascended into heaven and was given “all authority” (Matt. 28:20) as “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). We must confess and obey this Jesus to be saved! (Phil. 2:9-12; Heb. 5:9) 2) Preach the compassionate Jesus without the angry Jesus. Jesus

was the ultimate example of compassion (Matt. 14:14). But some serve a Jesus who never gets upset and angry. This is not the Jesus of the Bible. The real Jesus was angry at wickedness, sin, false teachers and their doctrines! On one occasion when dealing with wicked people it is said He “looked around at them with anger” (Mark 3:5). On another, his disciples remarked that “the Pharisees were offended” (Matt. 15:12) by what Jesus said. On another, He was angry enough to call people “Hypocrites!”, “blind guides”, “Fools”, “whitewashed tombs”, “Serpents, brood of vipers” (Matt. 23). 3) Preach the tolerant Jesus without the strict Jesus. Many view Jesus as ever tolerant of anybody and anything. The Jesus of the Bible showed great patience, but He never gave unquestioning acceptance! Jesus said, “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way

that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matt. 7:13-14). He also said (Matt. 7:21-23) that religion alone, regardless of how sincere, will not save us! But, we must do the will of His "Father in heaven," otherwise on the day of judgment He will say to us, "I never knew you; depart from Me" (Matt. 7:23). Not presenting this aspect of Jesus is to preach "another Jesus"! 4) Preach the saving Jesus without the judging Jesus. Many people only want to know a Jesus who saves (John 3:16). Undoubtedly the news of salvation is the most wonderful news ever heard. But, the real Jesus is not just a Savior, He will one day also be our judge. Paul said, "the Lord Jesus Christ... will judge the living and the dead at His appearing" (2Tim. 4:1) and "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2Cor. 5:10). Is it any wonder then that in view of this Paul said, "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men"? (2Cor 5:11) – Craig Thomas

Fireworks always attract a crowd, whether on the Fourth of July or at any other time when they might be displayed. There's a good reason why, for example, Disneyland puts on a major

"spectacular in the sky" every summer evening — people will stay in the park to watch the fireworks, and while they're waiting, will buy more Disney merchandise. Sometimes people come to the services of the Lord's church in search of fireworks. Not in the literal sense, necessarily — but in the sense that they are looking for the same sort of entertainment spectacle that fireworks provide. Without question, there are plenty of churches around offering that spectacle. In fact, there's a church that meets just around the corner from my house that's actually selling fireworks this weekend, right in their parking lot. And many people will stop to buy. When people visit our worship, however, they don't find much in the way of fireworks. Our music is simple congregational singing, without mechanical accompaniment. No band, no choir, no soloists, no "praise team" — just the fruit of lips that praise the Lord (Hebrews 13:15) in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Our prayers are simple petitions — just our supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving (1 Timothy 2:1). The words aren't fancy or repeated from books written by men (Matthew 6:7), but they come from sincere hearts, and are offered in the name of Jesus (Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:17). Our observance of the Lord's supper is not elaborate — we break

People, Places, and Things of the **BIBLE**



Smiting Gods Found From Baal Worship

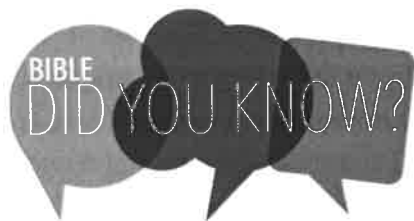
A pair of smiting gods and other rare ritual artifacts are among the fascinating discoveries described in a recently published comprehensive report of the 2013-2017 excavations of the archaeology-rich Lachish site. The report digs deep into 12th century BCE Canaanite worship practices, from the modest temple structure, to ritual items discovered inside. Israeli archaeologist Yosef Garfinkel uncovered the ruins of a Canaanite temple from the 12th century B.C. The excavation site, located in Lachish, one of the most important Old Testament cities in the region, has yielded a trove of artifacts used in Canaanite worship, including jewelry, daggers, and two four-inch-tall bronze figurines of “smiting gods.” Perhaps the most significant discovery at the temple is a bronze scepter coated with silver. Garfinkel believes it was held by a human-sized statue of the Canaanite god Baal. The statue itself was not found, but large statues of ancient Canaanite gods are rare. “This excavation has been breathtaking,” said lead archaeologist Professor Yosef Garfinkel at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem’s Institute of Archaeology in a press release on Monday. The excavation report, “The Level VI North-East Temple At Tel Lachish,” was recently published in the academic journal *Levant: The Journal of The Council for British Research In the Levant*.



“Only once every 30 or 40 years do we get the chance to excavate a Canaanite temple in Israel. What we found sheds new light on ancient life in the region. It would be hard to overstate the importance of these findings,” said Garfinkel, who led the excavation along with Professor Michael Hasel of Southern Adventist University in Tennessee.

bread and drink the fruit of the vine on the first day of each week (1 Corinthians 11:23-34; Acts 20:7). No one puts on special clothing or assumes a special title in order to serve at the Lord's table. We support the Lord's work only through a collection for the saints on the first day of each week (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). We don't run bingo games or carnivals or car washes or bake sales or raffles to raise money — we don't even sell fireworks in the parking lot. And we only spend the money we give on things the Bible authorizes, such as worship and the means to conduct it, tools for teaching the gospel, supporting preachers locally and in other places, and helping one another in time of need. Even our preacher isn't particularly flashy or eloquent or theatrical or well-dressed or good-looking. (You can trust me on this.) He wears no lofty title or unique garments — he is merely a minister or servant of the church. Jesus often contended with those who came to Him only in search of spectacle (John 6:25-27; Matthew 12:38-40). His miracles were never done for the purpose of providing entertainment for thrill-seekers, but to demonstrate His deity and authority. The power He invested in his apostles was given to confirm their witness of the gospel (Luke 24:48-49), not so they could perform parlor tricks. The apostle Paul wrote, *"For Jews request a*

sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:22-24). That is all that we have Christ's permission to offer the world — the gospel of His death, burial, and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-5). If you've come here in search of fireworks, I'm afraid you'll be disappointed. But you might be surprised to find something infinitely better — the simple, precious truths of God's holy word. — Michael D. Rankins



"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."
2 Cor. 1:3-4