

Molech

Molech is the pagan god of the Ammonites whose worship involved child sacrifice (Lev 18:21; 20:2-5; 2 Kings 23:10; Jer 32:35). Other names for Molech is Milcom (Zeph 1:5) and Moloch, which is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew term Molech.

Scholars suggest that the term "Molek" is a deliberate mis-vocalization of the Hebrew term for "king" or "ruler". Combined with the vowels from the Hebrew term for "shame" (boshet) and the consonants for the Hebrew term "king" (mlk), "Molek" became an epithet expressing contempt for the pagan God.

Solomon was the first Israelite to build a high place for Molech as well as for other foreign gods (1 Kings 11:7). This sin would be the reason why Solomon's kingdom would be torn away (1 Kings 11:11-13, 30-39).

In their apostasy, disobedient Israelites sacrificed their children (Jer 7:31; 19:5; 32:35) in the Valley of Hinnom at a place called Topheth.

Child sacrifice was a practice that continued into the first century. It was a pagan religious practice reported among Carthaginians, Phoenicians and some Romans.

Modern archeology has not recovered any physical evidence of Molek. Our current understanding is based on ancient texts like the Bible.

12th century Rabbinical literature describe a hollow bronze statue in the form of a human but with the head of an ox. According to the rabbis, children were placed in the hot structure while priests pounded drums to drown out the cries of children.

One rabbinical tradition describes the idol as having seven compartments with each compartment assigned a certain type of sacrifice: one for flour, a turtle dove, an ewe, a ram, a calf, an ox and a human child. In this description, these different offerings were all burned together.

