

however, the *Testimony* is not in a position to commence a series of articles on these lines due to commitments already made to publishing material, so it would be some time before anything could be published. Also, readers may like to bear in mind that the Internet is a good source for finding second-hand copies of out-of-print works, which may also have been scanned in and made available in downloadable form. I typed "*The Superman Origin of the Bible*" into the Google search engine, and immediately came across copies for sale second-hand and a downloadable version of it.—*T.B.*

## The delusions of Dawkins

Regarding the criticism in the review of two books opposing Richard Dawkins ([Nov. 2007, p. 370](#)), different personalities respond in different ways, and I wonder whether we should be more charitable towards Alister McGrath. When what has

been described in the press as a wimpish church has remained silent, Professor McGrath went on the offensive. His main objective is to demonstrate the fundamental inadequacy of the Dawkins approach, and this he does brilliantly.

This man has taken a great step forward in believing in the God of the Bible (though at present inadequately from our point of view) and rejecting the mindlessness of Professor Dawkins, who believes that the complexity of life began by accident. Might it not be a good thing if one or more of our brethren who are scientists contacted him with a view to discussion, pointing out, for example, that in Genesis 1 and 2 the creation of man is presented separately from the animal creation?

It is a terrible indictment of this generation that *The God Delusion* is a best-seller, whereas neither Andrew Wilson's nor Alister McGrath's books will achieve that status.

*Tom McCarthy*  
Newport

# Molech and the Son of God

## A study in contrasts

### 4. The death of Stephen and the conversion of Paul

Tom McCarthy

*Part 4 shows how Stephen likened the Jews of his days to their Molech-worshipping forefathers, and how Paul changed from being a persecutor in the spirit of Molech to a follower of the Son of God.*

**T**HE [PREVIOUS article](#) showed that the rejection and crucifixion of the Son of God had both parallels and contrasts with Israel's Old Testament rejection of God for Molech, referred to in Amos 5:25-27. We now look at Stephen's defence, as recorded in Acts 7, and in particular his use of this passage in Amos.

Acts 7 is sometimes called Stephen's defence. It might also be called his indictment of his accusers. His exposition is masterly, and could be nothing less as he was full of faith and the Holy Spirit, grace and power. As he stood before the council it had already been demonstrated that the wisdom of his words could not rightly be gainsaid. He was indicted on four counts of blas-

phemy: against Moses; against God; against the temple; against the Law (6:11-14). Note how they put Moses first instead of God. Stephen corrects this by putting God first, His rightful place: "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham . . ." (7:2).

His introduction of Abraham is a corrective. Moses, the Law and the temple come later than the covenant made with Abraham, and, if Abraham's descendants do not manifest the same spirit as Abraham, then Moses, the Law and the temple avail them nothing. Jesus had to remind the Jews of the same thing. They accused him of violating the Law and going against Moses, but he told them that it was they who did not keep the Law, and pointed out that their desire to kill him was something that Abraham would not have done (Jno. 7:19; 8:39,40).

Stephen then takes them on a selective résumé of their history, showing how God and His chosen

agents had been treated by their fathers. Joseph, rejected by his brethren and sold as a slave, becomes governor of Egypt and Israel's deliverer. Moses, who for their sakes refused his royal status, was in turn rejected by them. He was eventually appointed ruler and deliverer by the angel at the bush. David, hunted and driven from the Land, finds favour before God, and prepares the way for Solomon to build the temple.

### Showing the spirit of Molech

As for their supposed veneration of the temple, he points out two things. Firstly, the tabernacle which their fathers carried in the wilderness was the legitimate sojourning place of God as he journeyed with them, and was made strictly according to the pattern that He revealed to Moses (v. 44). But they preferred another pattern and another god. This was a flagrant full-faced sin against the personality of Yahweh and a violation of the spirit of His altar. On the way to the Land they desired an idol, the golden calf, to lead them back to Egypt, and they carried the spirit of Molech in their hearts by their continued idolatry (Ezek. 20:10-26).

In his choice of prophetic condemnation, Stephen strikes at the heart of the matter: "Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to Me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of *your* god Remphan, figures which *ye made* to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon" (Acts 7:42,43).

Secondly, the temple which they claimed to be defending was the sanctuary of God, also made according to His pattern. So the tabernacle was a home for God, and the temple was a home for God, but that was not where He really wished to live. His ideal home was in a responsive and submissive human heart. On the way into the Land, Israel had for the most part failed to see this, and up to the time of Stephen's speaking they still could not see it. In a masterstroke of genius, Stephen starts a quotation, but does not finish it: "Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will ye build Me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of My rest? Hath not My hand made all these things?"

The quotation is from Isaiah 66:1,2 and Stephen does not complete it. If he had continued they would have heard, ". . . but to this man will I

look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word". Possibly they may have finished the quotation automatically. However, Stephen continued, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy [Spirit]: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51).

By using the terms "stiffnecked and uncircumcised" he is telling them that, just like their fathers, they refused the words of Moses (Deut. 10:16). In reality they were spiritual Canaanites, uncircumcised Molech-worshippers. He was accused of blasphemy against Moses, God, the temple and the Law. The word of the Lord came to Abraham; the word of the Lord dictated the Law; the word of the Lord designed the temple; and they had offended against the Word in all these things. Molech worship offended against the person of Deity and the spirit of the altar. They had lost sight of the spirit of the altar and the personality of God, which could only lead to a Molech-type sacrifice: the betrayal and murder of the *righteous one* (Acts 7:52). These spiritual Molech-worshippers had passed the true seed, Jesus, to him.

### Rejection of the spiritual Molech-worshippers

It is fitting that Stephen should see the glory of God, that same God whose glory had appeared to Abraham (v. 2). Stephen's vision was enhanced from Abraham's. He saw also Jesus standing at the right hand, even that Jesus whose coming and day Abraham rejoiced to see (Jno. 8:56). Abraham saw firstly the glory and lastly the ram caught in the thicket. Stephen commences by referring to the God of glory and ends by seeing the glory of God and Jesus at his right hand.

Amos had prophesied to the faithless of his day, saying that, because of their worship of Molech, they would be carried "beyond Damascus". Stephen in his quotation alters the destination and extends the distance, not now just northwards and eastwards towards Babylon, but "beyond Babylon", to the ends of the earth, to "states unborn, and accents yet unknown".<sup>1</sup>

This time there would be no Joseph to deliver them from famine, no Moses to lead them from captivity, and no David to deliver them out of the hand of the Philistines. Abraham had been told that his seed would be afflicted in a "land

---

1. *Julius Caesar*, act 3, scene 1.



**St Stephen's Gate, in the east wall of the Old City of Jerusalem, named from a Greek Orthodox tradition that Stephen was stoned at this spot.**

Picture: [www.HolyLandPhotos.org](http://www.HolyLandPhotos.org)

that is not theirs" (Gen. 15:13), "a strange land" (Acts 7:6). That happened because of the rejection of Joseph. Now Jesus had been rejected, and they would sojourn among the nations, known by an irony amongst Jewry as 'Molech—these Gentile lands'.

The punishment under God's law for the worship of Molech was stoning. In Stephen's case the one who indicts the 'Molech-worshippers' is stoned. This was done to save their "place and nation" (Jno. 11:48). But God had the last word. In accordance with the words of Jesus, not one stone of the temple was left upon another, it was all thrown down (Mt. 24:2). The nation was effectively stoned with the stones of its own temple. Yahweh had turned His face against them.<sup>2</sup>

### **Molech and the conversion of Saul**

The story is not complete. In killing Stephen the Jews manifested the spirit of Molech. As he died Stephen manifested the spirit of the altar: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge". He showed the spirit of God, the desire to forgive. There was still time for them to change. The offer to do so would be given by one who would, in a sense, be Stephen's replacement, though at the time he did not know it. "And the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul . . . And Saul was consenting unto his death" (Acts 7:58; 8:1).

Under the Law any who shut their eyes or consented to the worship of Molech would come under God's direct scrutiny and reaction (Lev. 20:4,5). Any consenter to the deed would not go unnoticed. By a happy concurrence Knox translates, "I will rid My people of the man who

played the wanton with Molech, and all who consented to it". Saul of Tarsus consented to the death of Stephen and was a leading activist in the intense persecution which raged against the ecclesia at Jerusalem, and then further afield. Stephen breathed out prayer, Saul breathed out threatenings and murder. His persecution was vigorous and totally committed to what he genuinely believed was right action on behalf of the God of Israel (Acts 8:3; 22:4; 26:10,11). As he later admitted, he did it in ignorance and unbelief. His motivation was honest and completely lacking in self-interest. He truly believed that the crucified Nazarene was an impostor who had met his just deserts, and that his followers should receive the same treatment.

The Lord Jesus could have arrested him at any time and any place. But he chose the Damascus road, the very road that those condemned under Amos's prophecy would have taken, the very prophecy that Stephen had quoted: "Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus" (Amos 5:27).

So Saul, the taker of prisoners, was himself "apprehended" by Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:12). He did not get as far as Damascus, let alone beyond it. He was not going into captivity away from the God of Israel, but being brought back to Him. When he did arrive at the city it was not to arrest people for the Molech-type persecution that began with the death of Stephen, it was to

---

2. Ezekiel saw the heavens opened at the time of the destruction of the first temple. Stephen saw the heavens opened while defending the true temple. The second temple would later fall.

begin his testimony that Jesus was the Christ. Abraham carried forward the purpose of God when he saw His glory in Chaldea, and Moses when he beheld the glory at the bush. Now Saul, soon to be called Paul, saw the glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Under the Law the punishment for worship of Molech was for God to set his face against the offender and to “cut him off . . . from among their people” (Lev. 20:5). Because of his new allegiance, Paul soon found himself cut off from his people, and several times was stoned. He counted it all a small price to pay for “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord”, although his status as “an Hebrew of the Hebrews” was lost (Phil. 3:4-8).

The Molech victim went into the fire of Molech’s stomach and was destroyed. Saul would destroy no more: “Is not this he that destroyed . . . ?” (Acts 9:21). As a Hebrew he would have been passed to Yahweh at his birth. For a time through ignorance and unbelief he had consented to the destruction of God’s people of the new covenant. To worship Molech was to offend God. To persecute the people of the Nazarene was to strike him: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (v. 4). He was now separated to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and as he rose from baptism, calling on the Name of the Lord, he was once again “passed to Yahweh”. The rest of his life was spent as Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, causing many to turn from idols to serve the living and the true God.

His work continues whenever his words are read or his life considered, and will be enlarged when he receives his “crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8). Molech has not triumphed.<sup>3</sup>

The lessons for us today are manifest. The god of this world sacrifices its children to all that is unholy and untrue, striving to consign them to an unwholesome uniformity that seeks to degrade personality and break down every barrier of seamliness. It must be of significance that a society which teaches its children that they have evolved from beasts is producing a generation which is worse than beastly. The animals of the natural world live within the limits of their God-appointed instincts. A humanity which elects not to acknowledge its Divine origins is fit only for the fire—the fire of judgement.

(Concluded)

- 
3. Molech may be vocalised as ‘the King’. It is of interest to note that, when Paul speaks of his salvation from unbelief, blasphemy, and persecution of the saints, to be placed in the ministry, he ends by speaking of the Divine King. When he mentions the good profession of faith by Christ Jesus before Pontius Pilate (Molech’s representative), he again speaks of Divine kingship (1 Tim. 1:12-17; 6:13-16).

## The peregrine falcon

Edward Wright

*One of the many outstanding examples in nature of Divine design is that of the peregrine falcon, the ultimate aerial hunter. It possesses a number of remarkable design features, all of which must exist together to enable it to fulfil its role as a supreme predator.*

**T**HERE ARE THIRTY-NINE species of falcon, the best-known being the peregrine. In medieval times the peregrine was called ‘the pilgrim falcon’ because the falconers used to catch the young birds on their migration (or pilgrimage) from the nesting place rather than taking them from the nest.

Strictly speaking, ‘falcon’ is the term for the female, the male bird being called a ‘tercel’ or ‘tiercel’ from an Old French word for one third.<sup>1</sup>

The falcon, the larger and more powerful hunter, is the bird of choice for falconry. The use of pesticides such as DDT was the prime cause for their serious decline in the British Isles, and they became an endangered species, but their range has more recently

much increased, with new nest sites being reported every year.

### Designed for speed

So why is it that, when there are many other raptors (birds of prey) which are very good hunters,

- 
1. Possibly from the smaller size of the male bird, or from a tradition that only one egg in three hatched a male chick.—D.J.B.