

## Not ALL Priests are God's Priests

Following the taking away into captivity of the northern tribes of Israel, the Assyrian king populated Samaria with men from various cities that had been subjugated by Assyria, "and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel" (2 Kings 17:24). Following the carrying away of Israel, we are told, "And so it was, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not Jehovah: therefore Jehovah sent lions among them, which killed some of them. Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast carried away, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the law of the god of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the law of the god of the land. Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the law of the god of the land. So one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Beth-el, and taught them how they should fear Jehovah. Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt" (2 Kings 17:25-29).

What's interesting about this event is that the priest dwelt in Beth-el. There are a number of things that need to be understood. When Jeroboam the son of Nebat had caused Israel to sin, he set up idols, "he set up the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin; for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made houses of high places, and made priests from among all the people, that were not of the sons of Levi" (1 Kings 12:29-31).

Whoever this priest was who "taught them how they should fear Jehovah," it is sufficient to say he was not of the tribe of Levi, and his teaching would have been according to the previous sins of Israel associated with Beth-el, and as a result did not properly represent Jehovah, so that, "every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt." Though the inhabitants of the land acknowledged the God of Israel, they did not serve him fully: they, by their actions, combined His worship with that of their own gods.

Do you believe in the God of heaven, but yet keep the idols of your imagination?

Remember the words of the Lord, saying, "Every man of the house of Israel that taketh his idols into his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I Jehovah will answer him therein according to the multitude of his idols; that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols" (Ezekiel 14:4) ret