

AN OLD TYME BAAL REVIVAL?

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Introduction

Modern Christianity is identified by most as being a monotheistic religion. While there are many Christian denominations, as a general rule Christianity recognizes the deity of Jesus, his coming to earth in bodily form, and his death, burial, and resurrection. Furthermore, Christianity is recognized to be born out of Judaism, and while practicing Jews would view Christianity as a cult, Christians see themselves as living in the fulfillment of Old Testament promises of the messiah. Throughout the Old Testament, the prophets challenged the Jews to worship YHWH, the only true god. Thus, it would seem that monotheistic Christianity was born out of monotheistic Judaism in a world that was predominated by polytheistic religions. However, not all scholars agree with this monotheistic identification.

Robert Price asserts that original Christianity was not monotheistic, and for that matter neither was Judaism. Price states, “It is not so much a case of Christianity and Judaism having separated from one another as of emergent Orthodox Judaism, Mishnaic Judaism, excluding from itself the various types of Judaism among which early Christianity belonged.”¹ Price does not see Christianity as an evolutionary step in Judaistic thought. Rather, he sees Christianity as an attempt to reclaim the old religion that monotheistic Judaism had developed out of. Price observes, “Radical critics sometimes say that Judaism was only partly the origin of the Christian faith, that paganism contributed just as much of the original DNA.”² According to Price, radical critics assert that Christianity has roots in paganism, and it stands to reason that if this is true then early Christian beliefs about Jesus would reflect pagan religious motifs. In fact, Price must

1. Robert M. Price, “Diaspora Judaism, Christianity, and Roman Crisis,” in *Judaism and Christianity: New Directions for Dialogue and Understanding*, ed. Alan J. Avery-Peck and Jacob Newsner (E.J. Brill, 2009), Accessed July 3, 2013, <http://www.robertmprice.mindvendor.com/theolist.htm>.

2. Ibid.

consider himself a radical critic as he sees Christianity being influenced in this way. Price states, "...when the family next door celebrated the death and resurrection of Osiris or Adonis this might appeal to a Jew who was dimly aware that his grandfathers had celebrated pretty much the same rites in honor of Baal, Tammuz, or even Isaac, years before."³ For Price, early Christianity was a revival of the old Jewish religion rooted in Baal. Price states, "...I cannot help but wonder if the early Christians appropriated the old resurrection theology of Baal to explain what happened to Jesus."⁴ Price sees the concept of resurrection in early Christianity as a reflection of pagan influences, specifically that of Baal.

This paper seeks to evaluate Price's claims of the influence of Baal mythology on early Christian views of the resurrection. This will be accomplished using the minimal facts approach, which utilizes historical facts that are commonly accepted by all critics.⁵ Towards that end, this paper will discuss the Baal resurrection myth, evaluate if Baal is the proper origin of the YHWH religion, and will comparatively analyze the meaning of the resurrection accounts of Baal and Jesus. In so doing, this paper will show, using commonly accepted historical data, that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the resurrection accounts of Jesus in early Christianity are not related to the resurrection of Baal.

3. Price, "Diaspora, Judaism, Christianity and Roman Crisis."

4. Robert M. Price, "Corn King Christianity: The Missing Option in the Neo-Pagan Spectrum," *Christian*New Age Quarterly*, no. 10 (December 1992), Accessed July 3, 2013, <http://www.robertmprice.mindvendor.com/theolist.htm>.

5. Gary Habermas and Mike Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008), 44.

Baal, a Summary

Vital to the analysis of the influence of the Baal cult on early Christianity is an understanding of who Baal was and how he interacted with other divinity. In short, Baal was a fertility god of the Canaanites whose death and resurrection were associated with the cycles of the seasons, especially that of the rainy season. Here can be seen the foundation for the assertions of those, such as Price, who claim similarity between Jesus' resurrection and that of Baal. Both were viewed as gods and both rose from death.

Baal is the Canaanite god of the fertilizing rain. He is the son of 'El and the husband/brother of Anat.⁶ While there are many gods in the Canaanite pantheon, one of special concern to Baal is Mot. Mot is the god of death, but not death in an annihilationist vein. Jacobs states, "...Mot is the god of corn. He undergoes the fate which overtakes the crops and to which the grain-god is therefore universally subjected."⁷ Mot utilizes the fertilizing rain of Baal to bring growth to the dead seeds of grain. As could be imagined, this appropriation of his rain by Mot is not pleasing to Baal. However, Baal's displeasure is deeper than what first may be seen. Baal does not merely send the rain, Baal is the rain. With the end of the rainy season, "...Baal has expended himself completely, for the intensely dry period to come after the end of the harvest...Baal has made himself the victim of Mot...[Mot's] assimilation of the substance of Baal is intertwined with the latter's own operation."⁸ Jacobs' description of the relationship between Baal and Mot is one of interdependence. Without the fertilizing rain, Mot causes

6. Vivian Jacobs and Isaac Rosensohn, "The Myth of Mot and 'Al'eyan Ba'al," *Harvard Theological Review* 38, no. 2 (April, 1945): 78-79.

7. *Ibid.*, 79.

8. *Ibid.*, 93-94.

dryness, drought, death. Without Mot's ability to influence dead grain, Baal casts himself down as rain, providing means but without the ability to grow crops. Jacobs states, "But there is nothing of the corn or of the earth in Ba'al's constitution, as he is portrayed in our texts."⁹ In other words, Baal is incapable of doing the job of Mot, a job in which Baal's own substance is manipulated by another. Every season, Anat seeks revenge for Baal and destroys Mot, though the destruction is not absolute but causes more of a regression.¹⁰ This destruction is manifested by instigating humans to harvest the grains. The cycle then repeats, which compounds Baal's frustration.

Baal is not content with the status quo, and seeks to usurp Mot's role in the created order. While the account is more detailed than what is allowed for here, suffice it to say that Baal attempts to overpower Mot and fails. Jacobs observes, "...his power are insufficient, despite his dreams of dominance, to encompass the whole of the agriculturalist's year. Ba'al hurls himself against the bars of an order of things to him distressing, but the order stands firm."¹¹ Baal, the son of 'El, the bringer of the fertile rain, is powerless to overcome Mot on his own and must rely on Anat to bring him back to life.

This summary has shown Baal to be a god vitally important to the survival of humanity. He is a god who seeks additional power but is incapable of claiming that power. Through the actions of Anat, Baal is able to rise from the earth and prepare to cast down his substance (rain) onto the earth once more. Mot is never completely defeated, and without Mot the grain would not be able to utilize Baal's fertile rain. Again, it is the worship of Baal that Price identifies as

9. Jacobs, 104.

10. Ibid, 98.

11. Ibid, 97.

the original god of Judaism, and it is Baal that Christ was emulating. However, an examination of critical scholarship reveals that Price does not enjoy unanimous support for this claim amongst his peers.

‘El, YHWH, or Baal?

While Price makes many assertions regarding pagan influences on Christianity, he is very specific about the influence of Baal. Price states, “In fact, Jehovah had always been little more than Baal-Hadad with a non-de-plume.”¹² In Baal there is a historical example of religious belief identifying the son of a god with resurrection, and Christians believe Jesus to be the son of god who died and rose again. However, further analysis is needed if Price’s assertion is to be found as substantiated, coincidental, or inconclusive. This section will look at two other theories of the origins of YHWH worship, one that traces lineage back to ‘El, not Baal, and one that identifies YHWH as a god originally outside of the Canaanite pantheon.

There is no dispute that Baal is a Canaanite god featured in the Bible. This does not, however, necessitate a conclusion that YHWH is a derivative of Baal. In fact, some scholars such as Mark Smith find archeological evidence shows a lack of Biblical evidence for a Baal connection to YHWH. Smith notes that there is a lack of conflict in the Old Testament between, “...the chief deity of Israel and the god of Death...The absence of this conflict is all the more striking because of the Bible’s massive complex of storm-battle imagery shared with the Ugaritic texts.”¹³ Here, Smith is calling attention to the relationship between Baal and Mot, or the lack thereof. Smith is arguing that if Baal was the precursor for YHWH then, given the intimate

12. Price, “Diaspora Judaism, Christianity and Roman Crisis.”

13. Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel’s Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 130.

nature of fertility and death in Canaanite religion, there should be some kind of struggle between YHWH and death. However, the lack of interaction between the chief god and death is not his only argument against a Baal /YHWH relationship. If such a relationship did exist then it would be reflected in the language of the people. Smith notes the work done by Tigay on inscriptional onomastica and draws out that Israelite inscriptions show 557 names with YHWH as a divine element, 77 with ‘El, and only a handful in reference to Baal.¹⁴ His conclusion with this observation is that ‘El, not Baal, is associated with YHWH.¹⁵

An objection could be raised at this point against Smith. ‘El can be used as a generic ‘god’ term. A modern example would be English speaking Christians who regularly refer directly to their deity as god while the term ‘god’ is a generic English term that can be used for any deity. The vast difference between the 557 terms of YHWH in the above inscriptions and the 77 with ‘El would seem to support this conclusion. However, Smith bases his conclusion on more than just inscriptions. He observes that there are similarities between ‘El in the Ugaritic texts and YHWH in that he is an aged patriarchal god, enthroned amidst the assembly of divine beings.¹⁶ For scholars such as Smith, the textual evidence is stronger for an association between ‘El and YHWH than between Baal and YHWH.

Whether or not one agrees with his conclusions, Smith raises the notion that while Baal is mentioned in scripture, and he rises from the dead, there is perhaps more textual support for an ‘El/YHWH relationship than the superficial Baal connection. It is safe to say that Price will not agree with Smith on this issue. However, while a complete analysis of the Ugaritic texts is

14. Smith, 141.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid. In this author’s opinion, equating an angel to Baal, which is essentially what Smith does, is not a direct religious parallel, but discussion on that topic is a subject for another paper.

beyond the scope of this paper, what this discussion of 'El reveals is that the idea of Jesus referring back to a Baal worship as the precursor of Judaism is not so obvious as Price would make it sound. A scholarly argument can be made for a tradition of 'El worship as primary in Jewish religious history. However, not everyone is willing to concede that YHWH was originally a Canaanite god.

In asserting Canaanite influence on YHWH, it would be an error to not consider Jewish tradition. While there could be redactional concerns, any historical evidence for the history of YHWH worship should be considered. Lewis Paton, for example, makes use of geographical considerations in his analysis of YHWH's history. In reference to an analysis of the geographical location of Horeb-Sinai, Paton states, "If he [Yahweh] had been originally a god of Canaan, Israel could never have come to think of a mountain outside of Canaan as his special dwelling place."¹⁷ Here, Paton is building an argument for an origin of YHWH that attempts to be mindful of the impact of territorial boundaries on social thought. In reference to Horeb-Sinai, Paton is asserting that the importance a mountain has in relation to a god's power is not something that can be easily relocated. If YHWH was Baal then Horeb-Sinai, which is beyond Canaanite borders, would not be a likely seat of power. However, the location of Horeb-Sinai is not the only observation made by Paton. The importance of national unity also plays a part in determining YHWH's origins.

Paton asserts that the national unity required to conquer Canaan would not have been possible under the banner of a new god. Their unity, "...presupposes common experience of the help of Yahweh on the part of the tribes before their entrance into Canaan, and is inconsistent

17. Lewis Bayles Paton, "The Origin of Yahweh-Worship in Israel: I," *The Biblical World* 28, no. 1 (July 1906): 11.

with the idea that he was a God whom they came to know after the conquest.”¹⁸ Paton argues that Moses unified the people under the banner of YHWH, and while this name was new to the Jews their reaction to that god indicates that this is merely a new name for a known deity. Paton basis this conclusion on the observation that, “There is no other case in history where a reformer has preached an absolutely new god.”¹⁹ Simply put, Paton argues Israel would not have rallied under the banner of an unknown god. In line with Paton’s conclusions that YHWH was not a Canaanite god is Nissim Amzallag’s observations of metallurgical deities. Tracing the importance of cooper in metallurgical deities and in events of the Israelite Exodus, Amzallag notes that no Canaanite deity associated with cooper is identified among the 240 Canaanite deities in the Ugaritic texts.²⁰ Furthermore, Amzallag states, “In parallel, it is interesting to notice that Ugaritic texts also ‘forgot’ to mention Yahweh. All these indications invite the testing of the hypothesis that Yahweh was formerly the Canaanite god of metallurgy.”²¹ In his article, Amzallag is arguing for YHWH being a metallurgical god, just not one that originates in Canaan.

This section has presented alternative arguments for identifying YHWH’s origins as not pertaining to Baal. The compatibility of these arguments with each other is not necessary for this paper. As was mentioned at the beginning of this section, Price identifies YHWH, Jehovah, with Baal, and, as was mentioned in the introduction, he sees Baal as being the foundational religion for Judaism, of which Christianity was born out of. These arguments for YHWH being derived

18. Paton, “The Origin of Yahweh-Worship in Israel: I,” 13.

19. Lewis Bayles Paton, “The Origin of Yahweh-Worship in Israel: II,” *The Biblical World* 28, no. 2 (August 1906): 114.

20. Nissim Amzallag, “Yahweh, the Canaanite God of Metallurgy?” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33, no. 4 (May 11, 2009): 390.

21. *Ibid.*

from 'El and of YHWH not originating in Canaan at all show that Price's argument for a Baal origin of Judaism is not as conclusive as he would make it sound. Please note, each of these examples come from scholars who are not arguing from a vantage point of biblical inerrancy. On the contrary, much of what they argue for would be offensive to the ears of Orthodox Jews and Christians. However, collectively they make a case that works against Price's notion of Baal worship being original Judaism. That being said, it could still be argued that since Baal worship was present in Old Testament Israel, as scriptures readily attest, that even if Baal is not the original YHWH, Jesus could still have been trying to refer back to traditions of Baal mythology. The assertion that Jesus' death and resurrection is nothing more than a revival of the Baal myth should still be considered.

A Homonym of Resurrection

The fact that ancient documents show both Baal and Jesus dying and resurrecting is not in dispute. However, context is important, and the connotations of resurrection for Baal and for Jesus should be considered.

Baal's Resurrection

A significant aspect of Price's argument is his insistence that one should be mindful of the religious historical contexts of early Christianity. Price states, "His myths told how Baal had been killed by the death monster Mot. Then he rose from the dead and vanquished Mot and took the throne, proclaimed a king of gods. All this was, then, quite familiar to ancient Israelites, and there is no reason to believe knowledge of these things had vanished by the time of Jesus."²²

22. Price, "Corn King Christianity: The Missing Option in the Neo-Pagan Spectrum."

Price's claim that the contemporaries of Jesus were familiar with the myths of Baal is not disputed here. However, Price's account of Baal's resurrection should be analyzed.

Baal does not vanquish Mot. It is his sister/wife Anat that instigates humans to bring about the remission of Mot and allows Baal to resurrect. On his own, Baal cannot defeat Mot, and Baal does try to overthrow Mot but is unable to do so. Smith states, "The presentation of Baal as a relatively weaker figure needing extensive divine assistance is consistent with his presentation throughout the cycle. Indeed, Baal is no super-conquering god like Marduk in *Enuma Elish* or Yahweh in so much Israelite poetry."²³ Smith's observation should not be taken to mean that Baal was without power, just that there were other deities with more power than him. For an example in addition to Mot, John Gibson recounts that the sea monster Yam Nahar cannot be defeated by Baal and can only be kept in check by Baal and 'El working together.²⁴ So, while Baal is a powerful god he is not supremely powerful even to the point where Anat needed to intervene so that Mot does not dominate Baal.

The impact the above has on Baal's resurrection is two-fold. First, Baal cannot rise on his own accord. Second, Baal's relationship to Mot is necessary. Jacobs states, "Ba'al's submission to Mot is the dramatic expression of the idea that for the good of humanity the rain must ultimately be subservient to the crops."²⁵ Baal is needed for the fertilization of the crops, but Mot, death, not 'El, his father, is needed for the continued sustenance of humanity. This is the context of resurrection in the Baal myth that Price states is on the minds of 1st century Jews.

23. Smith, 129.

24. John C. L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (NY: Continuum International Publishing, 2004), 18.

25. Jacobs, 92.

Jesus' Resurrection

While the Jews did know of Baal at the time of Christ they were also aware of views on YHWH. Since Jesus operated in relation to YHWH it is pertinent to discuss any significant difference between YHWH and Canaanite deities. Once that is accomplished, this section will look at the creed used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 in order to determine what the earliest followers of Jesus thought his message meant.

During the time of Jesus, Jews were known not only for a monotheistic religion but also morality. Julius Beyer states, "The distinctive contribution of the Jews in their missionary activity was their insistence on monotheism and morality..."²⁶ As has been discussed previously, Price asserts that Jesus was reaching back in time past this new Judaism to Baal worship, but in seeing that contemporary Jews of Jesus had distinctive views of monotheism and morality it should not be automatically assumed that their faith was significantly different from their forefathers. In other words, determining how different the YHWH of the ancient Jews was from the YHWH of Jesus' time will be helpful in further understanding the context surrounding Jesus' resurrection.

The emphasis on morality by 1st century Judaism was not a new phenomenon born of a Hellenistic age. Paton states, "It is generally admitted that the most marked peculiarity of the Old Testament religion is its high ethical quality. Other ancient Semitic religions have had ethical elements; but they have attached the main importance to formal acts of worship..."²⁷ Not only did ancient Israelite YHWH worship entail a 'high ethical quality' but in not emphasizing that

26. Julius A. Beyer, "The Hellenistic Mystery Religion and the Old Testament," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 45, no. 1/2 (1926): 13.

27. Paton, "The Origin of Yahweh-Worship in Israel: II," 124.

morality in formal acts of worship there is an indication that the relationship between YHWH and Israel was different than the surrounding religions. Paton also observes, “If he [YHWH] has been a tutelary deity of the ordinary Semitic type he could not have given up his worshipers any more than they could have given him up; but since his relation to Israel was free he could terminate it at any moment.”²⁸ In other words, YHWH, who demanded moral excellence, was in a relationship with Israel that did not directly involve mutual survival. Without people harvesting the grain at the behest of Anat, Mot would not be defeated and Baal would not resurrect, but YHWH is not dependent on the Israelites. He cares about what they do, but he will continue to survive even if they do not. Dan Cohn-Sherbok notes that sacrifice is a means of establishing relationship with YHWH, it is not his sustenance.²⁹ The YHWH that ancient Israel worshipped, of whose faith Baal is supposedly the originator, displays distinctly different parameters for his behavior. This is the YHWH that the Jews had worshipped and in Jesus’ time worshipped as a monotheistic god of high moral quality. At the very least, the importance of morality for Judaism appears to have not diminished by the time of Jesus, and it is to followers of YHWH that Jesus first teaches. How then did the first believers view Jesus’ resurrection?

The existence of creeds of the early church and their inclusion in New Testament texts provides an opportunity for examining what was believed in terms of faith. Of these creeds, Ted Campbell notes that I Corinthians 15:3b-5 enjoys a nearly universal status as being recognized by New Testament scholars as a creed that was present in the earliest Christian communities.³⁰ It should be noted that the creeds were written to convey what those people believed to be true. In

28. Paton, “The Origin of Yahweh-Worship in Israel: II,” 126.

29. Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *Judaism: History, Belief, and Practice* (NY: Routledge, 2003), 16.

30. Ted Campbell, *The Gospel in Christian Traditions* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 17.

other words, there is bias present in the creeds. Of the Gospels, Cooper states, "...[they] are informed by a faith-filled orientation and impregnated with a quality derived from a living experience that knows him to be risen and powerful Lord of life."³¹ While this quote is in reference to the Gospels it is no less relevant here; the New Testament is biased, but biased opinion is what is needed at this point of the discussion. If Jesus were attempting to draw people back to a version of religion in line with Baal worship, of which the people are familiar, then the creeds of the earliest of Jesus' converts should reflect a religious message that aligns with Baal. Therefore, if Price is correct, an analysis of 1 Corinthians 15:3b-5 should not reveal anything that would be incompatible with Baal worship.

1 Corinthians 15:3b-5 reads, "...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve." (NASB) This is not the first outside source that is quoted by Paul in 1 Corinthians as he does this in 8:4 as well. However, there is a difference here between 15:3b-5 and 8:4. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor states that Paul's use, and/or lack of use, of *hoti* for emphasis in these passages shows that in 15:3b-5 Paul is not concerned with identifying his quotation for the audience.³² Paul's use of language demonstrates that 15:3b-5 was so commonly known that he had no fear of being mistaken for saying something original. In this common creed, Paul emphasizes the resurrection of Jesus. Referencing 15:3b-5, David Moffitt states, "...the argument seems designed to drive the Corinthians to the conclusion that their denial of the general resurrection leaves them both an empty faith and no other apostles they

31. Adam G. Cooper, *Life in the Flesh: An Anti-Gnostic Spiritual Philosophy* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 45.

32. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 231.

might want to pit against him.”³³ The resurrection of Jesus, in relation to the forgiveness of sins, is quoted by Paul as being fundamental to Christian faith, and in his proclamation, according to Moffitt, he is challenging the church at Corinth to find an apostle who could challenge his authority in the matter. Campbell notes that the forgiveness mentioned in this creed in relation to the scriptures, “. . .links the narrative of Christ’s work with the narrative of God’s acts and of God’s people in the Hebrew scriptures.”³⁴ Here, the creed not only identifies resurrection with divine work in relation to forgiveness for sin but also links it to Hebrew heritage.

Conclusion

Price asks, “. . .what set of images, what conceptuality lay ready at hand for use to interpret Jesus and his fate?”³⁵ This paper has attempted to take seriously the answer of this question and in so doing has looked at who Baal was, what his resurrection meant, who YHWH was, and what Jesus’ resurrection meant. The evidence presented here has shown multiple theories which argue for YHWH’s origins lying with either ‘El or a non-Canaanite god. The evidence has also shown that Baal’s resurrection is directly in relation to crop growth and he is powerless to overcome Mot on his own, without whom Baal cannot cause the grain to grow. The YHWH worship of the Jews, both ancient and 1st century, has been shown to entail a view of morality that goes beyond religious ritual. Furthermore, YHWH is not dependent upon the people for survival, as Baal is at the mercy of people obeying Anat in harvesting the grain so that Baal might rise again. If Jesus were attempting a Baal revival of sorts then his teaching would

33. David M. Moffitt, “Affirming the ‘Creed’: The Extent of Paul’s Citation of an Early Christian Formula in 1 Cor 15,3b-7,” *Zeitschrift Für Die Newtestamentliche Wissenschaft Und Die Kunde Der Älteren Kirche* 99, no. 1 (2008): 73.

34. Campbell, 17.

35. Price, “Corn King Christianity: The Missing Option in the Neo-Pagan Spectrum.”

reflect it, but the early creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3b-5 reveals belief in a resurrection that is concerned with the forgiveness of sin, not physical sustenance. These observations have been made by attempting utilizing facts that are generally accepted by most scholars. The question that then remains, “Does this information support Price’s claim that early Christians appropriated Baal theology to explain what happened to Jesus?”

Price asserts that, “...Jehovah had always been little more than Baal-Hadad with a non-de-plume.”³⁶ The evidence shown in this paper in regards to YHWH’s potential relationship with ‘El and the other evidence that makes the case for YHWH not being a Canaanite god convincingly show that the argument for YHWH being Baal is not airtight. In short, there appears to be no consensus amongst critical scholars who seek to establish a path of religious evolution for YHWH, and this lack of consensus does nothing to seriously threaten the belief in the originality of YHWH. However, since one could still argue for Jesus referencing Baal, additional evidence was provided in relation to what resurrection meant for Baal and for the first followers of Jesus. Baal has been found to be a god that is powerful, but not so powerful as to be able to defeat all others, such as Mot. Furthermore, Baal is dependent on the actions of Anat, and humanity, in reaping the harvest so that Mot may be diminished and Baal resurrect to cast down his rain again. Jesus’ resurrection was found to have a different emphasis. The early Christian creed found in 1 Corinthians 15:3b-5 shows that the first followers of Jesus, to whom he was supposedly reviving Baal theology, identified his resurrection with the forgiveness of sins. In short, the evidence for YHWH being Baal is not conclusive, Baal’s resurrection is tied to the rainy season (and therefore crop growth), and Jesus’ resurrection is identified with the

36. Price, “Diaspora Judaism, Christianity and Roman Crisis.”

forgiveness of sins. Baal's death provides a means of sustenance and his resurrection ensures that it can happen again. Jesus' death provides for spiritual, not physical, well-being.

It is the conclusion here that the evidence provided demonstrates significant differences between the resurrection accounts of Baal and Jesus. Similarities may exist between two objects without them being the same. An apple is round, so is an orange. They are also both fruit. Baal is the son of 'El; Jesus is the son of YHWH. Baal had religious followers, and Jesus has religious followers, and both have resurrection tails. However, this is where the similarity ends. The meanings that are part of the contexts of Baal and Jesus are not similar. In answer to Price's question it can be said, "The concepts of Baal that lay ready for the first Christian believers to interpret Jesus and his fate do not coincide with what they professed to believe. Any similarity between the resurrections of Baal and the resurrection of Jesus are by nature homonym, not synonym."

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