

They were called “holy men” and “holy women,” not because they were morally holy but because they were wholly “separated” to the service of their god. The same function of prompting Baal to do what is sought from him is seen in 1 Kings 18:26, 28. The priests’ desired fire from heaven and tried to represent this by making blood pour down their bodies, hoping that Baal might see and perform a similar action himself.⁷

d. The Attributes of Baal

As the sun-god, Baal was worshipped under two aspects, beneficent and destructive. Human victims were sacrificed to him in order to appease his anger in time of plague, the victim being usually the first-born of the sacrificer and being burnt alive. In the Old Testament this is euphemistically termed “passing” the victim “through the fire” (2 Kings 16:3). The forms under which Baal was worshipped were necessarily as numerous as the communities which worshipped him.

Temples. Temples of Baal at Samaria and Jerusalem are mentioned in 1 Kings 16:32 where they had been erected at the time when the Ahab dynasty endeavored to fuse Israelites and Jews and Phoenicians into a single people under the same national Phoenician god. In the reign of Ahab, Baal was served in Israel by 450 priests (1 Kings 18:19), as well as by prophets (2 Kings 10:19), and his worshippers wore special vestments when his ritual was performed. The ordinary offering made to the god consisted of incense and burnt sacrifices; on extraordinary occasions the victim was human. At times the priests worked themselves into a state of ecstasy, and dancing round the altar slashed themselves with knives (1 Kings 18:26, 28).⁸

(End RECK-20.08. See RECK 20.09 for continuation of study at p. 81.)

⁷ Steven Barabas, “Baal,” in *New International Bible Dictionary*, eds. J. D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 113.

⁸ A. H. Sayce, “Baal,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 1:345–46.



The Showdown on Mount Carmel: Elijah versus Baal

1 Kings 18:20 So Ahab sent a message among all the sons of Israel and brought the prophets together at Mount Carmel.

1. Elijah has seen no one but the widow and her son for three years until he encountered Obadiah and Ahab on his return trip to Israel. Now, on Mount Carmel, he is all alone in the midst of 850 prophets of Baal and the Asherah.
2. When I was a child, my grandmother Griffin would read children's books to me. Included among them was a series about the Lone Ranger and Tonto. The next verse brought to my mind the conversations these two had with each other. Here is one I have selected as an example of what Elijah was facing when he met those reversionists up on the hill:

"They've seen us, Tonto."

"That what you want, *Kemo Sabay*."

"That's right, Tonto. Remain here."

"*Kemo Sabay*, me know what you plan. You not go on alone!"

"Tonto, there's no time for argument. I'm going on alone. I'll offer myself as a target to those men."¹

1 Kings 18:21 Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people did not answer him a word.

v. 22 Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are 450 men."

1. Their failure to respond set the stage for a contest to be played out between the alleged "prophets of Baal" and true God of Israel. The result will reveal which of the two choices the worshippers of Baal will follow.
2. Advanced reversionism causes many to slowly but eventually abandon the worship of God and adopt the public rationales of the hour. When the latter choice is made, then worship is directed away from the teaching aids of the Mosaic Law to then adopt the practices of heathenism.

¹ Fran Striker, *The Lone Ranger and the Bitter Spring Feud* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1953), 86, 87, 88.



3. Today we have a stark transformation away from the immutable teachings of the Word of God over to emotional, happy-clappy, hand-raising, human-good foolishness.
4. I am aware that the youth of the present hour have primarily been brainwashed by the propaganda force-fed them throughout academia so that the disciplined inculcation of doctrine is passé. Yet this mind-set has resulted in a not-so different outcome than the one Elijah confronts on Mount Cármel.
5. We are fortunate to have the protection provided by Amendment I of the Constitution against a rogue Congress which “shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”
6. It may be argued that such a situation existed in the Northern Kingdom in the 9th century B.C.
7. **Principle:** All our citizens have the protections of a “free exercise” clause yet their volition is prone to deviate away from its original purpose and drift into heresy. Ergo, the worship of Baal.
8. And the personality that orchestrates this conversion is the ultimate mastermind of brainwashing people although their volitions are free to accept or reject his offerings. A well-established doctrinally oriented population is protected against his advances.
9. Yet after decades of disinformation from the Satanic Academy of Cosmic Didactics, vulnerable youth “have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity and greediness” (Ephesians 4:19).
10. Here in the twenty-first century Missouri’s reversionists can imitate Israel’s example by going down to Iron County and climb atop Täum Säuk Mountain, which is the state’s highest elevation of 1,772 feet, just 30 feet higher than Mount Cármel’s 1,742 feet.
11. Idolatry is presented as the worst sin because it acknowledged other gods besides Jehovah and to make an image or likeness of the deity:

Elijah mocked the priests of Ba’al in the contest on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:27). The prohibition against idolatry found expression in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:4), which forbade the representation of God in any form. The commandment was not an attack on artists and sculptors, but on idolaters. To worship idols was to go a-whoring after other gods; therefore idolatry was described as adultery.



Following a succession of kings who “walked in the way of Jeroboam,” Ahab came to the throne of Israel and established the cult of Ba’al of Sidon at Samaria. Elijah denounced Ahab and challenged the power of Ba’al (chapter 18). The principle struggle in which Elijah and Elisha were engaged was to see whether God or Ba’al would be acknowledge as God.²

12. Elijah is in the Northern Kingdom. Ahab, the king of Israel is in attendance. Not only are 450 of Baal’s prophets gathered there but also 400 prophets of Ashéráh and thousands of citizens of Israel (1 Kings 18:19).
13. Ashéráh was aggrandized by Jezebel as the Baal’s concubine. There were 400 of them and are described in 1 Kings 18:19 among those who ate at her table. This phrase indicates that they were members of the royal court.
14. Therefore, there were 850 priests on Mount Cárnel to supervise and participate in the activities Elijah will conduct along with throngs of Israelite citizens.
15. Elijah took his text and addressed the throng. He is facing thousands of people who were worshipers of Baal and Ashéráh. He has no fear. He is in fact anxious to get on with his demonstration. He will rope the dopes of Israel by clearly demonstrating that they were worshiping stocks and stones.
16. **Principle:** When you have doctrine in your soul, are convinced that its principles are classified by the Holy Spirit as absolute truth, then the number of those among the opposition have lost the battle before it begins.
17. **Principle:** The idol worshippers are wrong and Elijah is right. The God of Israel sent him on a mission to restore order in Israel. Whatever they do in response to Elijah’s presentation is up to their individual volitions to decide.
18. God has given him a plan and Elijah intends to execute it, jot and tittle. He kicks things off by giving orders to the priests:

1 Kings 18:22 Then Elijah said to the people, “I alone am left a prophet of the Lord, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men.

v. 23 “Now let them give us two oxen; and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up, and place it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other ox and lay it on the wood, and I will not put a fire under it.

² F. B. Huey, Jr., “Idolatry,” in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopaedia of the Bible*, gen. ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 3:245, 246.



1 Kings 18:24 “Now you call on the name of your god, but I will call on the name of the Lord, the One who answers by fire, He is the true God” And all the people said, “That is a good idea.”

1. Why did the priests think this was such a good idea? If you remember we have already studied Baal’s attributes that the priests have taught the people of Israel. Baal was referred to as the “sun god,” or “the god of fire.”
2. Fire in the Old Testament is specially associated with the divine presence. Fire from Jehovah signified the acceptance of certain special and separate sacrifices (1 Kings 18:38). This event occurred on Mount C armel.
3. The false doctrine of fire observed by the reversionists who worshipped Baal was simply their assumption that he was displaying his power by their observances of lightning, how its strikes ignited inflammable objects and its presence in consuming sacrifices on their altars, including, on occasion, humans including children.
4. It is this practice that the Lord intends to discredit in His attack against the heresy of Ahab and Jezebel, the reversionists of the people of the Northern Kingdom in particular, and generally to the residents of the Levant.
5. Elijah is the Lone Ranger. In other words, “I’m going on alone. I’ll offer myself as a target to those men.” Those men are the prophets of Baal who must engage the challenge but which they are convinced they will win.
6. Note the clarity of thought that steals the soul of Elijah. He courageously confronted Ahab with the claim there would be no rain for several years
7. “except by my word ” Then he is told to vanish from public view, first at the brook Cherith and later at a widow’s home in the town of Z arephath. During that time, he has witnessed several miracles by the Lord that sustained him and his hosts for three years: ravens, Cherith, the widow, the flour, and the oil. Now he has the doctrinal fortitude to trust in that divine provision on Mount C armel.
8. The divine provisions Elijah confidently expects to occur are: (1) the failure of fire to consume the offerings of the priests of Baal and (2) the provision of fire to consume the offerings of Elijah.
9. The priests of Baal are the ones who have constantly used fire to consume things offered to Baal. This was simply done behind the scenes since their propaganda had resulted in convincing the people that Baal had provided the fire when they were the ones who set it.
10. On this occasion, the priests must depend totally on Baal’s willingness to ignite the wood. This requires a detailed premise that sets up the contest.

