

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 Asherah and thousands of citizens of Israel (1 Kings 18:19).
13. Asherah 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 Carmel 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 Asherah. 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 steels the soul of Elijah. He courageously confronted Ahab with the claim there would be no rain for several years “except by my word.”
7. 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.



There are three significant concepts involved in centering the contest around the ability of the deity to send fire. **(1) Fire is an indication of the presence of God.** In biblical texts, fire is seen as accompanying theophanies. In this way the contest asked the respective deities to show themselves. **(2) Fire is connected to the lightning of the storm god.** As the storm god, Baal is depicted with lightning bolts in his hand and is spoken of in the texts as flashing forth with fire or lightning. Baal was therefore considered by his worshipers as the lord of fire. In the continuing agenda of the narrative that Yahweh show his superiority in every area of Baal's domain, the ability to bring fire is strategic. **(3) Fire represents the acceptance of the sacrifice.** Burnt offerings of this sort typically accompanied petition. In this case the petition on everyone's mind was for the drought to end. If both parties had been praying for the drought to end, the resulting rain could be attributed by either group to its own god. As a result the contest is set up to demonstrate which deity is responding to the petition of his followers. If fire is sent, the petition has been granted, and the rain that follows can be attributed to the correct deity. It is therefore important to recognize the close connection between the sending of the fire and the sending of the rain.³

11. When a believer takes a stand behind a biblical principle or doctrine, those who oppose it are unable to counter truth except by intimidation, violence, terrorism, and bloodshed.
12. Advanced believers in our nation today have truth on their side and are best advised to stand fast with that truth. Do not waver, do not apologize, do not bow, and do not argue. God honors and defends His truth wherever it is found.
13. Whether you succeed or are assaulted by means of cosmic mayhem, truth wins the contest. You are either aggrandized by God for your steadfastness or considered by Him a martyr for truth. Never, never, never, never quit!

³ John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, & Mark W. Chavalas, "1 Kings," in *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2000), 378.

14. On what basis does Elijah base his confidence that God will ignite the altar and the ox's remains that lie upon it? One example was Moses commissioning Aaron as the high priest of the Levitical priesthood. Leviticus 9 describes the process of burnt offerings culminating with that of an ox summarized by these verses in:

Leviticus 9:18a Aaron slaughtered the ox and the ram, the sacrifice of peace offerings which was for the people;

Leviticus 9:22 Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he stepped down after making the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings.

v. 23 Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting [**the Tabernacle**]. When they came out and blessed the people, the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people.

v. 24 Then fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the portions of fat on the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

15. Elijah has set up Baal's worshipers and his priests. Scripture confirms that the imputation of fire upon a sacrificial ox on a wooden altar is the one true God. That process is about to take place on C armel.
16. Nevertheless, the priests of Baal are boxed in. They are now required to demonstrate to King Ahab, to the people of Israel, and most importantly to Elijah, that Baal will strike with fire their ox on the altar.
17. And now, the process begins as Elijah gives orders to the priests but he does so with great objectivity by allowing them to choose and prepare their ox first.

1 Kings 18:25 So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one ox for yourselves and prepare it first for you are many, and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it.

1. Why the restriction not to put fire under it? Because, according to them, Baal will provide the fire. Elijah, the Lone Ranger, is running his show. In any situation when leadership is required to accomplish an objective, one man must take charge, set fair rules, and display confidence in others to carry them out in a proper manner.

2. By allowing the 450 priests of Baal to go first allows their arrogance to assume they have the advantage in this contest. But those who support the lie are at an extreme disadvantage when confronted by one who possesses absolute truth.
3. **Principle:** Doctrine overcomes the lie whether the contest is one man versus one man or one man versus four hundred and fifty men. The efforts of the priests of Baal were relentless but futile:

1 Kings 18:26 Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying, “O Baal, answer us.” But there was no voice and no one answered. And they leaped about the altar which they made.

4. After hours of all this caterwauling, Elijah could not help himself so he began mocking with them:

1 Kings 18:27 It came about at noon, that Elijah mocked [הָתַל (*hathal*): ridiculed] them and said, “Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.”

1. His ridiculing of the priests was intended to make sport of them with tongue in cheek.
2. His first shot was to suggest a command, “Call out,” the Qal imperative of קָרָא (*qara*): “to call or summon” and do it “with a loud voice.” Elijah, all alone, is shouting orders to 450 priests of Baal.
3. He sarcastically reminds them that Baal “is a god.” He then starts with the humor; “**either he is occupied,**” the noun, שִׂיחַ (*siyach*): “contemplating what he will decide to do.”
4. His next suggestion is a funny one. The NASB uses the phrase “**gone aside**” which is the noun, שִׁיג (*siyg*): “to go aside to relieve himself.”
5. If not that, then he must be “**on a journey,**” דֶּרֶךְ (*derek*): the word for “wheel-track,” which refers to the road that leads to another place.
6. And Elijah’s final barb is, “**perhaps he is asleep,**” יָשָׁן (*yashen*). He follows this up with the suggestion that perhaps Baal “needs to be awakened.”

5. These suggestions energized the priests into a more advanced frenzy as is indicated by the next verse:

1 Kings 18:28 So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves [hithpa‘el imperfect of the verb גָּתַחַ (gathath): the action of the hithpa‘el is intensive, the imperfect tense indicates continuous action] according to their custom [מִשְׁפָּט (mishpat): “tradition”] with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them.

1. The problem these boys have is that they are the priests of Baal. The invisible demons do what it takes to bail them out of their predicament. They have done the usual things to solicit a response from Baal, but to no effect.
2. Elijah’s needling sends them into a rage and their efforts intensify to the absurd. Their self-mutilation with their swords and lances that caused their own blood to “gush out” is a clear indication of demon possession.
3. What is transpiring on Cármel is not much different from what is happening in the streets and highways of Blue Cities and States of twenty-first-century America as demon-possessed acolytes of Lucifer dispense mayhem while elected authorities’ offer their public approval.
4. Two terrorist organizations have the approval and support of the local politicians to carry out these war games with the intention of transforming the United States into a communist country.
5. If successful in the coming election, the Democrat Party is ready and willing to impose this wrath upon the fifty states, a danger that has some voices recommending secession from the Union.⁴
6. **Principle:** In the Old Testament, God established Israel as His priest nation under the rulership of the Mosaic Law. When the Jewish people failed in their duties to the Law, then predators, such as Ahab and his Phoenician wife, Jezebel, led one of the many revolts against God’s established order.
7. On the occasion we are studying, God sent Elijah as His Lone Ranger to expose the heresy promoted by the priests of Baal. Elijah’s efforts bought the Northern Kingdom more time, but eventually it fell due to a continuing absence of divine thought.
8. Over the course of the last century—1920–2020—civilian leadership in this country has had occasional periods of good governance, but they have been suppressed by the creeping but ever progressing specter of communism.

⁴ See: F. H. Buckley, *American Secession: The Looming Threat of a National Breakup* (New York: Encounter Books, 2020).



9. Five years ago, the stage was set to move full bore into socialism with power no longer residing in the states but rather concentrated in the federal government.
10. The strategy was for Hillary Clinton to orchestrate the transformation but something entirely unexpected occurred. A non-politician but a rich businessman from New York City joined a gaggle of Republican wannabes running for president. He was not the usually bland, run-of-the-mill Republican.
11. Instead, he was as unorthodox as far as politics are concerned. He had ideas about how things ought to be in a free society and said them out loud behind the campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again," to which the citizens voted a resounding, "Amen!"
12. Usual politician, Donald John Trump is not. He is, finally, a problem solver, an innovator, yes, a deal maker, his most recent, stunning achievement is the astounding success to bring peace to the Middle East where the region's Arab nations joined Jewish Israel in a Middle East peace agreement.
13. President Trump is not the usual smooth-talking yet boring politician but a problem-solver and a deal maker that renewed the power inherent in a free society. Yet his unorthodox personality is disliked by many although his actions have restored American hegemony.
14. Trump is to politics as George Patton was to the U.S. Army. In World War II, the American forces were led by General Dwight D. Eisenhower. The British forces were led by Field Marshall Bernard L. Montgomery. Because the Brits had been in the war from its beginning, Eisenhower reluctantly allowed Montgomery to command an attempted invasion of Germany from the Netherlands and dubbed Operation Market Garden.
15. Eisenhower knew that Montgomery did not have the military moxie to pull off the attack but because he was the British commander, he allowed the mission to go forward while realizing that the effort would fail.

Almost every feature of Operation Market Garden ... simply affirmed what had already become evident in North Africa, that Montgomery was generally incapable of conducting anything but stolid defenses or attacks with generous lead times, material superiority and no urgent deadline during the battle. One might even go so far as to say that Market Garden showed Montgomery and the army he had led created in the worst possible light, revealing serious lapses in planning and tactical command.

