

The next paragraph contains Elijah's turn at the altar beginning with:

1 Kings 18:30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord which had been torn down.

1. First of all, let's establish to whom Elijah refers. The text indicates he spoke to "all the people." Who these people are is revealed in:

1 Kings 18:19 "Now then send and gather to me all Israel [כל יִשְׂרָאֵל (*kol Yisra'el*): refers to adult males of the Northern Kingdom] at Mount Carmel, together with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table.

2. So how many adult males were residents of the Northern Kingdom? I have done research to come up with the estimated population of Israel during the reign of the several kings we have cited during the ninth-century B.C.:

A considerable population expansion is thought to have occurred in the period following David's census, during the rather peaceful and prosperous reign of King Solomon (965—928 B.C.E.). In regard to later periods, in which the Jewish kingdoms were divided, fluctuations in population levels are suggested in the literature. For the 9th and 8th centuries B.C., the estimates suggested by the authors quoted in Appendix 2A are rather close to each other, and indicate orders of magnitude included between 1,000,000 and over 1,350,000.²

3. I have a second source, although with a higher estimate, it does indicate a population fairly close to the higher one cited above:

It was time for a showdown between ADONAI and Baal to begin; it was decided that the four hundred and fifty prophets would go first in calling down fire. They were to get two bulls, one of themselves and one for Elijah. Their bull they were to dissect on the altar on top of the wood, but they were not to set fire to the wood. It was time for them to go ahead and show the perhaps two million persons gathered on Mount Carmel what sort of stuff Baal is made of.³

² Robert Bachi, *The Population of Israel* (Jerusalem: Scientific Translations International, 1974), 16.

³ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Lives and Ministries of Elijah and Elisha* (Clarksville, MD: Lederer Books, 2019), 16–17.



4. You do the math for the United States with a population of 325 million as compared to the Lord's 7,000 in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal. From that we can imagine the possibly that mathematics might reveal the number of believers that are needed for the delivery of client nation USA in her present hour of testing.
5. This throng had just witnessed the failure of the priests of Baal to gain the response of a single spark from their alleged Storm God. Elijah begins the process of repairing the Lord's altar.
6. The word "altar" is the masculine noun, מִזְבֵּחַ (*mizbeath*): "an altar as a place of offering a sacrifice by the slaughter of an animal."
7. Scripture designates that such an altar be constructed of earth or undressed stones because human working of the stones would defile it. This type of altar is referred to as a Cairn Altar. Pronounced, *kern*, this construction is defined as, "a heap of stones piled up as a memorial or as a landmark." Here is a more detailed synopsis:

Cairn Altar. An altar consisting of earth or unhewn stones. It had no fixed shape, but varied with the materials. It might consist of a rock or a single large stone or again a number of stones (1 Kings 18:31f). It could have no horns,⁴ for it would be impossible to give the stone horns without hewing it, nor would a heap of earth lend itself to the formation of horns.⁵
8. The cairn altar of the Lord had been torn down, clearly indicating the reversionism of the people. This altar was to be utilized to offer a sacrifice to God. Its destruction is believed by some theologians that it was ordered by Jezebel who led a campaign to replace the worship of Yahweh with that of Baal.
9. The cairn altar was previously used for anyone to make a sacrifice to the Lord but its removal facilitated the peoples' popular trend to submit to the sacrifices of the priests of Baal, many suspect that this altar was among many that Jezebel had removed in favor of the altars of the Baals.

⁴ "Horn (Hebrew, קֶרֶן (*keren*); κέρασ (*kéras*), for a ram's horn. Both the altar of burnt offering (Exodus 27:2) and the incense altar (Ex 30:2) had "horns," which are explained to be projections "of one piece with" the wooden framework and covered with the brass that covered the altar. They formed the most sacred part of the altar and were anointed with the blood of the most solemn sacrifices" (Burton Scott Easton, "Horn," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956], 3:1422).

⁵ Ibid., Harold M. Wiener, "altar, 1:107.



The Law permitted any layman to offer certain sacrifices at an altar of earth or unhewn stone without the assistance of a priest, while the second will be styled “horned altars,” owing to their possession of horns which could not exist in a lay altar that conformed with the provisions of the law.⁶

10. The cairn altar is prophetic of the Lord’s substitutionary sacrifice on the cross about a millennium later in city of Jerusalem. On that occasion the Lord was not laid on an altar of stone but nailed to a cross of wood. This element comes later in Elijah’s construction of the altar.

1 Kings 18:31 Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, “Israel shall be your name.”

1. The division of the twelve tribes of Israel into two nations was not by divine decree but because of reversionism among the Jewish people. Elijah’s twelve stones were a strong statement that God’s will was for these tribes to be united.
2. The evening sacrifice is to be conducted at 3:00 o’clock in the afternoon and Elijah is busily preparing the proper altar for that event. He has several reasons for the things he is doing. One of them has to do with the 12 stones which references the Jews retrospectively back to Mount Sinai:

Exodus 24:4 Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain [**Mount Sinai**] with twelve pillars [**מַצֵּבָה** (*massevah*): “unhewn blocks of stone”] for the twelve tribes of Israel.

3. When Elijah’s sacrifice is engulfed in flames, the one-million-plus Jews will be challenged to remember Moses’ similar event at the foot of Mount Sinai which Elijah purposefully erected at the foot of Mount Cárnel.
4. Although the Northern Kingdom contains ten of the twelve tribes, the Southern Kingdom of Judah consisted of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.
5. Elijah’s twelve stones reminded the crowd that even though the Northern Kingdom was separated from the two southern tribes, God intended for them, in perpetuity, to be united into twelve tribes, demonstrated by both Moses and Elijah.

⁶ Ibid., 1:107



6. Elijah's twelve stones are intended to make the point that although the northern and southern kingdoms are presently divided, from God's standpoint they together function as His priest nation.
7. Elijah's construction of an altar made up of twelve unhewn stones makes this point and also functions as a wheel-track to remind these Jews of Moses' original twelve-stone construction at Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:4).
8. The problem the two entities have created is that what was designed to be one divine unit of twelve tribes has, because of false doctrine practiced by both groups, the divine design has been fractured.
9. This is presently the circumstance for client nation USA. We recently noted a book that suggests that opinions in this country are so divided that the only way to restore order is for the fifty states to become once again divided by means of secession.
10. We did not secede from Great Britain. We declared war upon her. When divisions are so intractable that harmony cannot be achieved, then, within the confines of a national entity, resolution of the differences may only be resolved by drawing lines in the sand.
11. The former situation with Britain inspired Thomas Paine to write:

THESE are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated.⁷
12. Israel chose to become divided and Elijah is pointing out the fallacy of that decision by displaying before them the "original Israelite constitution" presented by Moses at the foot of Sinai.
13. There are traitors within the walls of our client nation whose fevered intent is to change this nation into a communist, socialist quagmire enforced by terrorists, having fired duly deployed law enforcement personnel.

⁷ Thomas Paine, *Common Sense and The Crisis* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1973), 69.

14. After properly arranging the twelve stones, Elijah continues his construction project in:

1 Kings 18:32 So with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he made a trench around the altar, large enough to hold two measures [מֶסֶרֶת (*se'ah*): 6.6 dry quarts or 7.7 liquid quarts] of seed.

1. Once he was satisfied the stones were properly arranged, Elijah began to prepare a reservoir designed to hold 7.7 quarts of water or 6.6 quarts of seed.
2. The measurements of dry and liquid quarts are used by the Holy Spirit to provide those in an agrarian society an idea of the capacity of the trench.
3. With the stones in place and trench dug, Elijah then placed wood on the altar:

1 Kings 18:33 The he arranged the wood and cut the ox in pieces and laid it on the wood.

v. 34 And he said, "Fill four pitchers with water and put it on the burnt offering and on the wood." And he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time. And he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time.

1. Now we must remember that there has not be a drop of rain for 3½years. So where are the guys finding all this water? The land mass of the Levant had been that long without rain, but this did not mean that underground springs did not feed water to some rivers as is document by this resource:

Cármel, a mountain ridge "with many peaks, intersected by hundreds of larger and smaller ravines," which stands out as a promontory running in a north-westerly direction into the Mediterranean. The scene of Elijah's sacrifice is to be sought for on one of the south-eastern heights of Cármel. "There is not a more conspicuous spot on all Cármel than the abrupt rocky height of el Mohraka, shooting up so suddenly on the east." Moreover, the soil was thoroughly adapted for the erection of the altar described in verses 31 and 32: "it showed a rocky surface, with a sufficiency of large fragments of rock lying all around, and, besides, well fitted for a rapid digging of a trench."⁸

(End RECK-20.10. See RECK-20.11 for continuation of study at p. 101.)

⁸ C. F. Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: The Books of the Kings*, trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), 243.

