

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 [מֶסֶחַ (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.

There is also water in the neighborhood, as is assumed in verse 34. “Nowhere does the Kíshōn [קִישׁוֹן (*qiyshōn*)] run so close to Mount Cármel as just beneath el Mohraka, which is ... perhaps 1000 feet above the Kíshōn. This height can be gone up and down in the short time allowed by the Scripture (vv. 40–44).” But it was possible to find water even nearer than this, to pour upon the burnt-offering in the manner described in vv. 34, 35. Close by the steep rocky wall of the height, just where you can descend to the Kíshōn through a steep ravine, you find “... a vaulted and very abundant fountain built in the form of a tank, with a few steps leading down into it, just as one finds elsewhere in the old wells or springs of the Jewish times.”—“From such a fountain alone could Elijah have procured so much water at that time. And as far as the distance between this spring and supposed site of the altar, it was every way possible for men to go thrice thither and back again to obtain the necessary supply.”^{1, 2}

1 Kings 18:35 The water flowed around the altar and he also filled the trench with water.

v. 36 At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, “O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word.

v. 37 “Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that You, O Lord, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again.”

2. Elijah has done all that the Word of God required him to do in preparing the sacrifice of the ox on the wood and stone altar. And he amplified his personal faith rest and his confidence in divine power by flooding the pieces of the ox and the altar with water.

¹ 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), 243–44.

² Note: Commentary enclosed in quotes is excerpted by Keil from: C. W. M. Van de Velde, *Narrative of a Journey through Syria and Palestine in 1851 and 1852* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1854), passim: https://books.google.com/books?id=5Nw_AAAAcAAJ&pg=PP9&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false



3. Elijah is using the dynamics of the faith-rest technique in his preparation of the altar, the presentation of the ox's dismembered parts, and his flooding of the independent parts with water.
4. Here are a few of the dynamics that Elijah used to demonstrate the power of the God of Israel in contradistinction with the cosmic speculation that supports the evils of demonism promoted by the worship of Baal.
5. By the way, there are cosmic rationales that motivate and support the evil actions the twenty-first century Brownshirts who stalk the Blue states' streets and cities.
6. We do not face a drought of a meteorological nature but rather one of a "loss of thought" regarding establishment and divine viewpoint.

Principles related to 1 Kings 18:36:

1. The timing of Elijah's arrival at Mount Cárnel was at the very end of the 3½-year drought, but yet he needed water in order to conduct an offering before the hundreds of thousands of Jews gathered near the Kíshōn River. It was fed by springs underneath the mountain whose waters flowed downhill into the Mediterranean Sea.
2. Give some thought to that provision. Part of Elijah's duties was to organize the assembly of citizens of the Northern Kingdom in order to challenge the priests of Baal to a contest.
3. They went first but to no avail. There is no Baal by which they had buffalooed the people into believing for decades. Elijah allowed them to show off on the side of Cárnel which resulted in the priests' physical exhaustion and public humiliation following their failure to conjure fire from Baal.
4. But, by divine decree, the water Elijah needed to teach a Bible class was provide by the springs associated with the Kíshōn River. He built an altar designed just like the one Moses built on the slopes of Mount Sinai.
5. Elijah's final effort in setting up his presentation to the people was to drown the ox sacrifice, its blood, the wood, the stones, and the trench with precious gallons of water described in 1 Kings 18:24–35.
6. The Jews had been so negative to doctrine that they had bought into the lie of an alleged god called Baal who was represented by a school of propagandists called the priests of Baal. They were well-paid communicators of the lie for an alleged god that Elijah had exposed as a myth.
7. It was now time for Elijah to expose to the people the undeniable truth and attendant power of the God of Israel. He introduces this power with a prayer to the Father, which we have just observed, and closed with this final appeal:



1 Kings 18:37 “Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that You, O Lord, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again.”

1. Elijah had done his duty by going through the prescribed preliminaries to offer the sacrifice before the Lord. Note that Elijah directed his prayer to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.
2. This is a proper prayer for an Old Testament context. Jesus Christ’s status prior to the Incarnation is that of undiminished deity of the second Person of the Trinity.
3. Elijah in his prayer also makes the case that it is the Lord to whom he prays and it will be from the Lord that his prayer will be answered.
4. In the Old Testament, prayers are direct to the Lord while post Incarnation, prayers are directed to the Father.
5. Verses 36 and 37 contain Elijah’s prayer to the Lord. He has accomplished everything that has been asked of him. He has placed his trust in the Lord to honor his efforts as he stands alone on the slopes of Mount C armel beside the drenched sacrifice.
6. His request to the Lord is that fire will both confirm and validate the sacrifice so that “this people may know that You, O Lord, are God.”
7. Fire is the element that confirms divine judgment on those who are guilty, however the flames were not directed toward the people but to the innocent ox who had done nothing wrong.
8. This was prophetic of the divine substitutionary sacrifice of the Jewish **מָשִׁיחַ (Mashiyach)**: “Messiah, the Anointed One.” The personality that fulfilled this sacrifice was Jesus of Nazareth in the first century in 34 A.D. Jerusalem.
9. The fire symbolized the divine imputation of humanity’s sins as its flames judged the innocent ox along with the altar’s wood, stones, and water.
10. It is the God of Israel Who judged the innocent ox, prophetically illustrating His divine propitiation of the entire human race. Simply put, propitiation refers to the act of divine justice which judges our sins and the integrity of God is satisfied with that judgment:

In the New Testament, propitiation is the Godward side of the work of Christ on the cross. The death of Christ for the sin of the world changed the whole position of mankind in its relation to God, for He recognizes what Christ did in behalf of the world whether man enters into it or not. (p. 259)



In the Old Testament, animal blood was efficacious only to the extent that it provided a just ground on which God could pass over the sins until Christ should come and shed His own blood for them. God was propitiated aforetime merely to the extent of deferring judgment. (p. 258–59)³

11. The term, “blood of Christ,” has more than one meaning in the New Testament. It is true that Jesus Christ literally shed blood while on the cross due to the nails driven into the wrist and ankles and the plunge of the Roman spear: *λόγχη (lónchē)*: “the tip of a spear.”

In the Bible, αἷμα (*haíma*), “blood,” can have several meanings which include human blood and animal blood. However when the New Testament speaks of the blood in relation to the sacrifice of Christ, it *does not* refer to literal blood. “The blood of Christ” is always a figure of speech. The Greek lexicographer, Walter Bauer, devotes an entire paragraph to the figurative use of the word in relation to Christ. He describes “the blood of Christ as an expiatory sacrifice ... especially the blood of Jesus as a means of expiation.”⁴ E. W. Bullinger categorizes phrases such as “justified by His blood” (Romans 5:9), “redemption through His blood” (Ephesians 1:7), “brought near by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:13), and “released from our sins by His blood” (Revelation 1:5) as double metonymy referring to the “merits of His atoning death.”⁵ Gerhard Kittel’s *Theological Dictionary* confirms that “the blood of Christ” in the New Testament “is simply a pregnant verbal symbol for the saving work of Christ.”⁶

12. Elijah’s preparation for divine fire was visual aids of what the Jews had forgotten in their deviations away from the Mosaic Law and in favor of those common to the worship of Baal.

³ Lewis Sperry Chafer, “Propitiation,” in *Systematic Theology: Doctrinal Summarization* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 7:259, 258.

⁴ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilber Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957) 22–23.

⁵ “Metonymy is a figure of speech by which one name or noun is used instead of another, to which it stands in a certain relation” E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968), 610–11).

⁶ Johannes Behm, “αἷμα,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. Gerhard Kittel; trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 1:175.



13. Among the gathered throng, the question to consider is how many of them still retained any recall of the Levitical offerings. The answer is, “not many,” but every person gathered was about to get a powerful reminder from on high of an overwhelming divine response to Elijah’s offering:

1 Kings 18:38 Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

1. The divine fire is said to have “consumed” the burnt offering. The verb, אָכַל (*’achal*): “to devour; to consume.”
2. This is the key verse of the passage. The priests of Baal, using exactly the same items upon their altar, had solicited absolutely nothing after 9 fruitless hours of caterwauling, gyrating, bloodletting on and around their altar.
3. Elijah’s efforts were first expended on preparing the kind of altar that the Mosaic Law prescribed and dousing it with three application of water upon it just prior to the divine consummation of the entire display.
4. Here are some essential details regarding the development of the altar, the provision of the cited water, and the ultimate divine imputation of fire.
5. Verses 31–37 provide an inventory of the elements Elijah used to prepare and present his offering of an ox: (1) twelve stones according to the twelve tribes of Israel [v. 31], (2) digging a trench around the altar [v. 32], (3) the arrangement of the wood and the dismembered pieces of the ox upon it [v. 33] (4) the pouring of four pitchers of water done three times upon the ox and the wood [vv. 34–35], and (5) prayer to the Lord for His divine response to his efforts [vv. 36–37].
6. Several details regarding these verses need to be addressed and we do so from the following analysis by C. F. Keil:

Elijah took twelve stones, “according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, Israel shall be thy name,” and built these stones into an altar. He then arranged the sacrifice upon the altar, and had four pails of water poured three times in succession upon the burnt-offering which was laid upon the pieces of wood, so that water flowed round about the altar, and then had the trench filled with water.

7. As noted earlier, some have argued that the three-and one-half-year drought surely included Mount Cárnel and the Kīshōn River, but our research has resolved that argument.

