



## Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

## Advanced Study AS015: Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

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**Read** 1 Kings 18:19-40.

**Introduction.** Elijah's ministry was to call the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel to turn from the worship of Baal and give their allegiance exclusively to the Lord (1 Kings 18:21). Baal worship in Israel was rampant under the reign of King Ahab (874-853 B.C.), having been introduced under Ahab's father, Omri, and exacerbated under the influence of Ahab's Syrian wife, Jezebel. Learn all you can about Baal and Asherah and their worship - it will help you understand the reasons for God sending the drought and the fire.

**1. Confrontation.** It began with a drought, prophesied by Elijah, whom Ahab considered responsible (read 1 Kings 17:1 and 18:17). (Read Chapter 17 in full, about Elijah's flight from Ahab's wrath and how the Lord took care of his needs.) Can you see the significance of drought and the fire?

**2. Challenge.** Confronting the prophets of Baal and Asherah [1 Kings 18]. There were several Canaanite gods they called Baal, which means 'master'. They were fertility gods, believed to control rain and harvests. Asherah was the consort of one or more of the Baals.

The story of the 'contest' on Mount Carmel is well known. Read Elijah's challenge (in 1 Kings 18:19-24). The prophets of Baal worked themselves in a frenzy, with no result [vs 25-29]. Elijah repaired the broken altar to the Lord and called for water to be poured over the altar and the sacrifice [vs 30-38]. He prayed, and God sent fire so intense that it burnt up everything - even the stones of the altar [vs 36-38]. The results are reported in vs 39-40. What effect did this have on the people (v39)?

Elijah ordered the prophets of Baal to be executed. Why was this (read Lev 17:3-5)?

Can you guess from where they got the water in a time of drought? (Look at the geography of Carmel for a clue.)

**3. Praying for rain** (1 Kings 18:42-46). Elijah prayed for the rain. Its coming was the end of the curse.

### For Further Thought and Study:

Read more of Elijah's story in 1 Kings Chapters 17-19 and 2 Kings Chapter 2. What do these events tell us about Elijah's character and faith?