

# Elijah, the Tishbite

Mt. Carmel

1 Kings 18:23–46

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

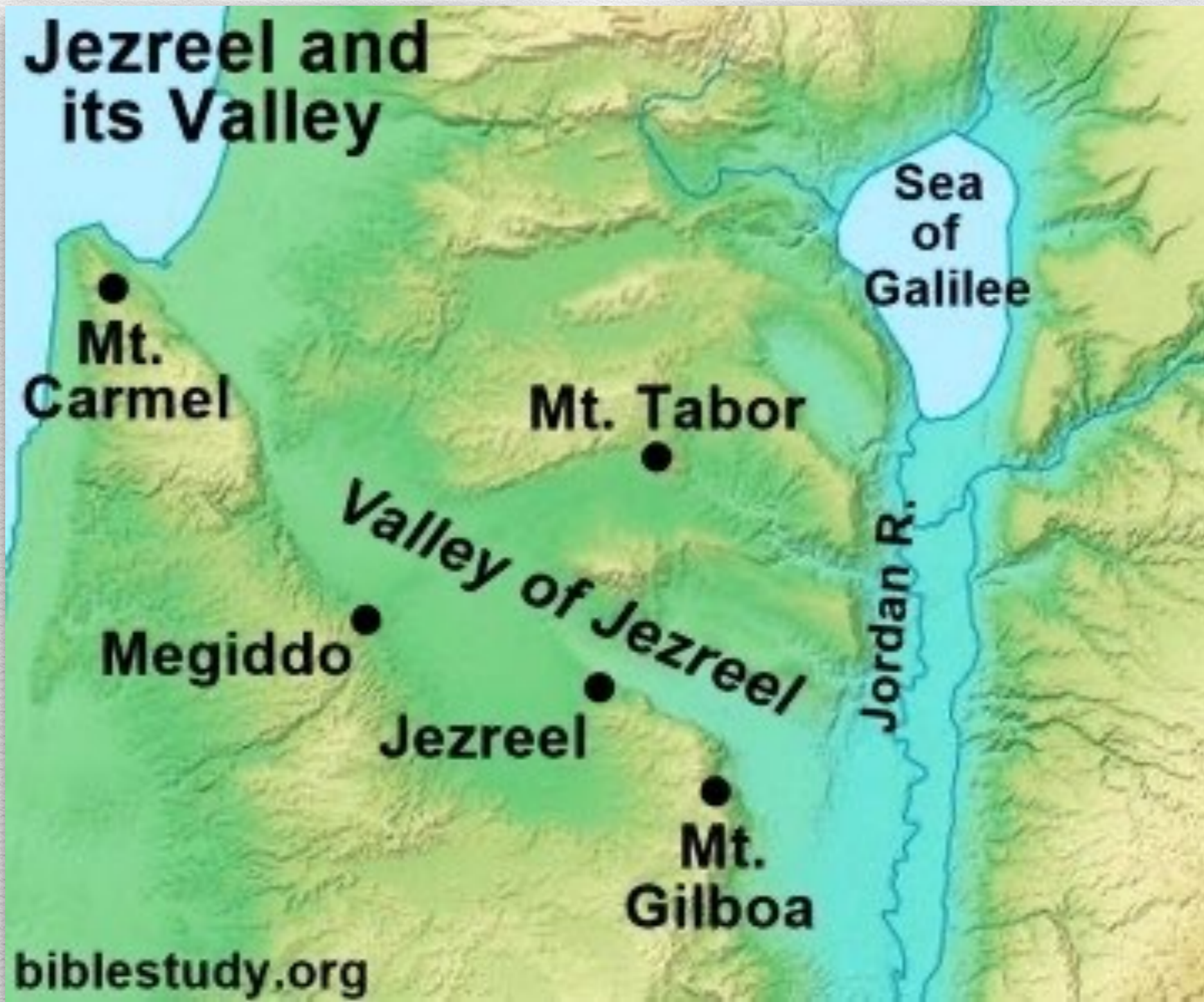
# The Scene

- The hosts of apostate Israel come from every town and village, with foreboding in their hearts.
- Jezebel's prophets march in with imposing array.
- The king appears in regal pomp and takes his position at the head of the priests, with the idolators shouting.
- And Elijah stands alone against all this fanfare and all these people, in charge of the scene.

# Jezreel, the City

There are two cities called Jezreel. The first, in the southern part of Israel, was given to the tribe of Judah as an inheritance (Joshua 15:56). The second, farther north, was part of Issachar's inheritance in the Promised Land (Joshua 19:18). Jezreel in Issachar was where King Ahab lived (1Kings 18:45, 46, 21:1) as well as King Joram (2Kings 8:29). It is also the place where Ahab's wife Jezebel and all the king's relatives were slain (2Kings 9:10–37, 10:1–11).

- V. 45 contains the first mention of Jezreel as a royal city. Ahab had a palace here, although Samaria continued to be his capital. It was to the palace in Jezreel that Ahab desired to add the vineyard of “Naboth the Jezreelite” (21:1). It was also here that the dogs ate the body of Jezebel (21:23), and it is where Joram was slain by Jehu.
- Jezreel was in the territory of Issachar in a picturesque location overlooking the plain of Esdraelon. It was probably 28 mi. (45 km.) from Mt. Carmel to Jezreel.



# Jezreel, the Valley

The valley near Jezreel separates Samaria to the south from Galilee to the north.

This valley was the location of many important Old Testament battles. Deborah commanded Barak to engage Sisera just south of Mount Tabor (Judges 4–5). Gideon and his army of three hundred men first engaged the Midianites in the valley (Judges 6–7).



King Saul and his three sons, including Jonathan, lost their lives fighting the Philistines on Mount Gilboa overlooking the valley of Jezreel (1 Samuel 31, 2 Samuel 1). Judah's King Josiah tried to stop Egypt's army from traveling further north but lost his life near Megiddo (2 Kings 23:29–30).

- Gideon — Judges 6:33, 34
- Battle with the Philistines — 1 Samuel 29:1

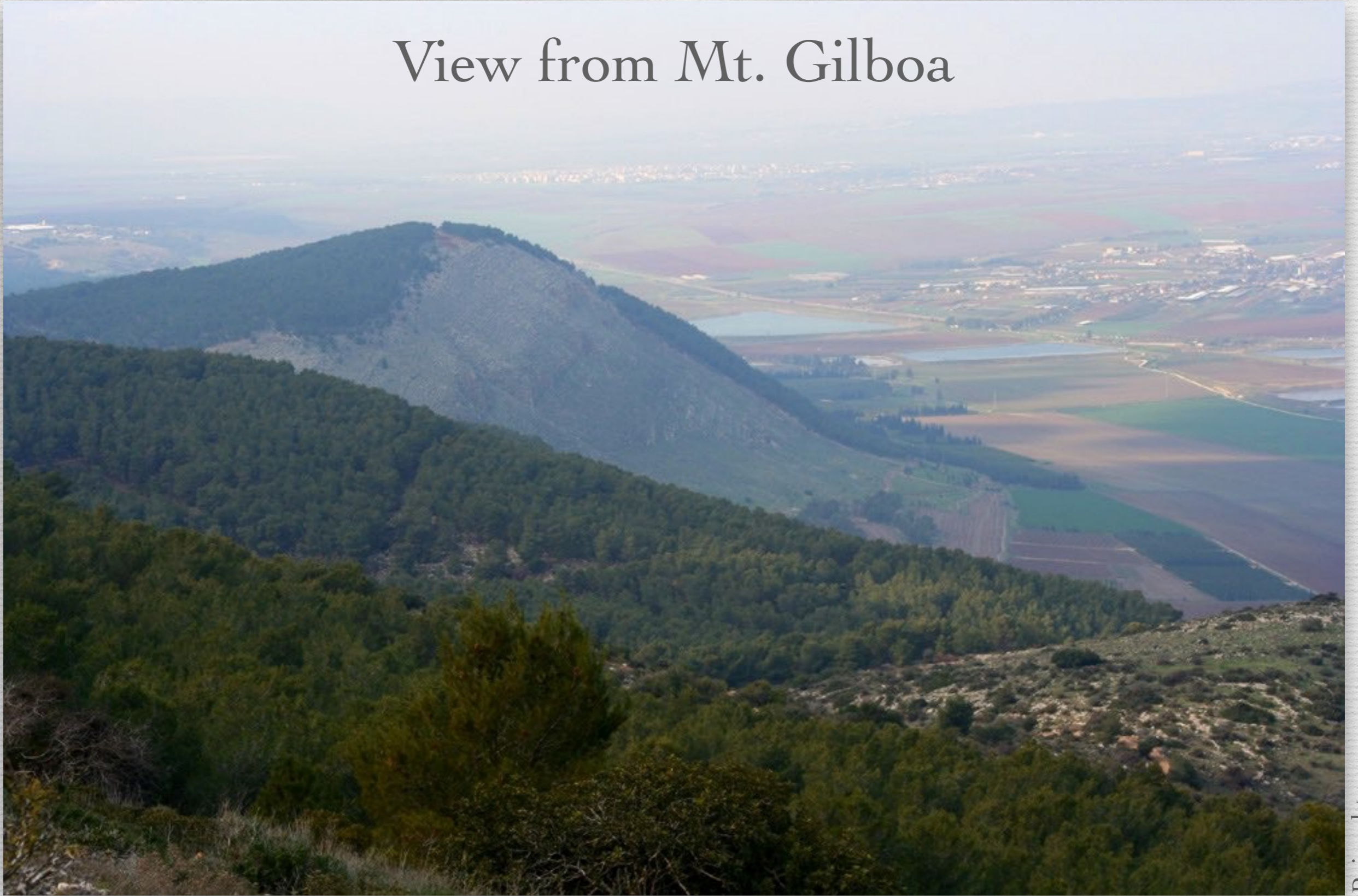
# View from Mt. Gilboa

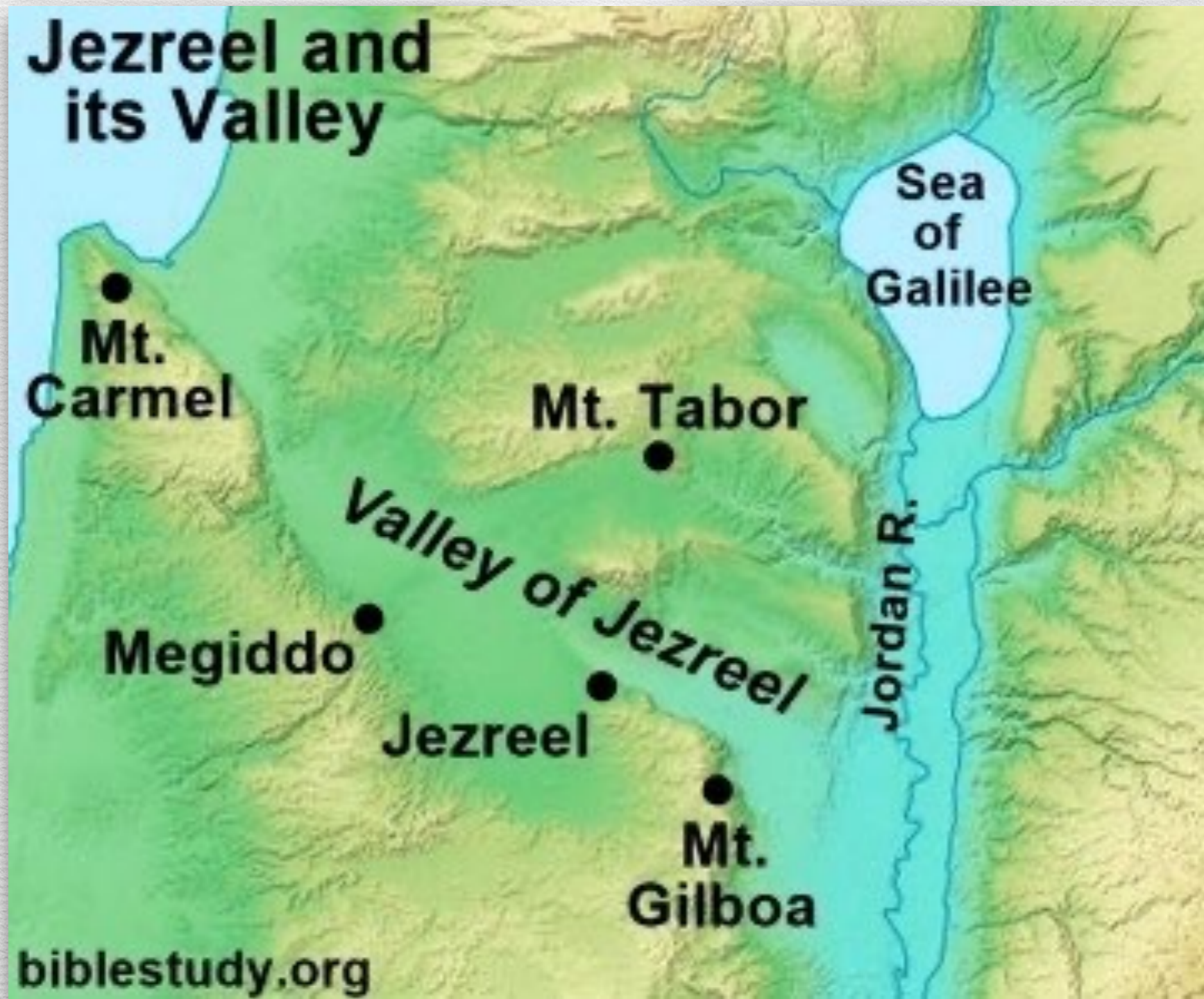


# Mt. Tabor in the distance



# View from Mt. Gilboa





# The Scene

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- All Israel (v. 19)
- The prophets of Baal—450
- The prophets of the groves—400. They ate at Jezebel's table.
- King Ahab
- Elijah



Unashamed, unterrified, the prophet stands before the multitude, fully aware of his commission to execute the divine command. His countenance is lighted with an awful solemnity. In anxious expectancy the people wait for him to speak. Looking first upon the broken-down altar of Jehovah, and then upon the multitude, Elijah cries out in clear, trumpetlike tones, “How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.”  
*(PK 147.2)*

# 1 Kings 18:24, 25 — call on the name of your gods

- name — shem — reputation, fame, standing, name
- singular, often used as a representative of character (2 Samuel 25:25), or as a tangible manifestation of character (Revelation 11:18; 2:13)
- Matthew 28:19 — name — anoma — can also mean reputation, fame, as well as a title, but it is singular also

- It is not always true that an individual's "name" reveals his essence. Names using foreign loan words and ancient words were probably often not understood. Of course, names such as "dog" (Caleb) and "bee" (Deborah) were not indicative of the persons who bore them. (Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of OT/NT)
- Perhaps some names indicated a single decisive characteristic of their bearer. In other cases, a "name" recalls an event or mood which the parent(s) experienced at or shortly before the child's birth and/or naming. Other names make a statement about an individual. (Ibid.)

- *Shem* can be a synonym for “reputation” or “fame”: “Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth” (Gen. 11:4). To “give a name for one” is to make him famous: “And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land ...” (2 Sam. 7:23). If a name goes forth for one, his “reputation” of fame is made known: “And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty ...” (Ezek. 16:14). Fame may include power: “And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, and slew them, and had the name among three” (2 Sam. 23:18).

- This word is sometimes a synonym for “memory” or “reputation” (that which remains): “... And so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth” (2 Sam. 14:7). In this respect “name” may include property, or an inheritance: “Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father” (Num. 27:4). (Ibid.)

- *Shem* can connote “renown” and “continuance” (in those remaining after one): “And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown” (Num. 16:2). This significance is in the phrase “to raise up his name after him”: “What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance” (cf. Deut. 9:14; 25:6; Ruth 4:5). (Ibid.)

# 1 Kings 18:24, 25 — call on the name of your gods

- name — singular
- gods — Elohim plural
- Isaiah 9:6 — wonderful, counsellor
- Power, reputation, fame, as well as a literal name like Deborah or Caleb, or an ancient or foreign word that people did not understand, or an expression of how the parents felt
- Yahweh Elohim or Baal Elohim

The people answer him not a word. **Not one in that vast assembly dare reveal loyalty to Jehovah.**

Like a dark cloud, deception and blindness had overspread Israel. Not all at once had this fatal apostasy closed about them, but gradually, as from time to time they had failed to heed the words of warning and reproof that the Lord sent them. Each departure from rightdoing, each refusal to repent, had deepened their guilt and driven them farther from Heaven. And now, in this crisis, they persisted in refusing to take their stand for God. (*PK 147.3*)



The Lord abhors indifference and disloyalty in a time of crisis in His work. The whole universe is watching with inexpressible interest the closing scenes of the great controversy between good and evil. The people of God are nearing the borders of the eternal world; what can be of more importance to them than that they be loyal to the God of heaven? (*PK 148.1*)

All through the ages, God has had moral heroes, and He has them now — those who, like Joseph and Elijah and Daniel, are **not ashamed to acknowledge themselves His peculiar people**. His special blessing accompanies the labors of men of action, men who will not be swerved from the straight line of duty, but who with divine energy will inquire, “Who is on the Lord’s side?”  
(Exodus 32:26),

men who will not stop merely with the inquiry, but who will demand that those who choose to identify themselves with the people of God shall step forward and reveal unmistakably their allegiance to the King of kings and Lord of lords. Such men make their wills and plans subordinate to the law of God. For love of Him they count not their lives dear unto themselves. Their work is to catch the light from the Word and let it shine forth to the world in clear, steady rays. **Fidelity to God is their motto.** (*PK 148.1*)

Facing King Ahab and the false prophets, and surrounded by the assembled hosts of Israel, Elijah stands, the only one who has appeared to vindicate the honor of Jehovah. He whom the whole kingdom has charged with its weight of woe is now before them, apparently defenseless in the presence of the **monarch** of Israel, the **prophets of Baal**, the **men of war**, and the **surrounding thousands**. But Elijah is not alone. Above and around him are the protecting hosts of heaven, angels that excel in strength. (*PK 147.1*)

As they continue their frenzied devotions, the crafty priests are continually trying to devise some means by which they may kindle a fire upon the altar and lead the people to believe that the fire has come direct from Baal. But Elijah watches every movement; and the priests, hoping against hope for some opportunity to deceive, continue to carry on their senseless ceremonies.

*(PK 149.4)*

Gladly would Satan have come to the help of those whom he had deceived, and who were devoted to his service. Gladly would he have sent the lightning to kindle their sacrifice. But **Jehovah has set Satan's bounds**, restrained his power, and not all the enemy's devices can convey one spark to Baal's altar.

*(PK 150.1, 2)*

# Revelation 13:13

There is a marked contrast between those who bear the seal of God and those who worship the beast and his image. The Lord's faithful servants will receive the bitterest persecution from false teachers, who will not hear the Word of God, and who prepare stumbling blocks to put in the way of those who would hear. But God's people are not to fear. **Satan cannot go beyond his limit.** The Lord will be the defense of His people. He regards the injury done to His servants for the truth's sake as done to Himself. When the last decision has been made, when all have taken sides, either for Christ and the commandments or for the great apostate, God will arise in His power, and the mouths of those who have blasphemed against Him will be forever stopped. Every opposing power will receive its punishment. [Jeremiah 25:30–33, quoted]. (*14MR* 163.1)



We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Many of the prophecies are about to be fulfilled in quick succession. (*16LtMs*, Ms 143, 1901, par. 71)

Every element of power is about to be set to work. Past history will be repeated; old controversies will arouse to new life, and peril will beset God's people on every side. Intensity is taking possession of the human family. It is permeating everything upon the earth. And for what? — Games, plays, amusements; men are rushing and crowding and contending for the mastery. That which is common and perishable is absorbing their attention, so that things of eternal interest are scarcely thought of. (*16LtMs*, Ms 143, 1901, par. 71)

Human beings, possessed with energy, zeal, and perseverance, will place all their God-given powers in co-operation with Satan's despotism to make void the law of God. Impostors of every caste and grade will claim to be worthy and true, and there will be a magnifying of the common and impure against the true and the holy. Thus the spurious is accepted, and the true standard of holiness is discarded, as the word of God was discarded by Adam and Eve for the lie of Satan. (*16LtMs*, Ms 143, 1901, par. 71)

We are coming right upon the time when Satan is to work with all manner of bewitching influences, and those who are charmed with them now, or give them the least countenance now, will be all ready to be swept right in to act a part with the devil then. Evil angels are working all the time upon the hearts of men. Satan is working with everyone who is not under the control of the Spirit of God. It is the lying wonders of the devil that will take the world captive, and **he will cause fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men.** He is to work miracles; and this wonderful, miracle-working power is to sweep in the whole world. It is now just beginning.

*(2SM 51.2)*

Gladly would Satan have come to the help of those whom he had deceived, and who were devoted to his service. Gladly would he have sent the lightning to kindle their sacrifice. But Jehovah has set Satan's bounds, restrained his power, and not all the enemy's devices can convey one spark to Baal's altar. At last, their voices hoarse with shouting, their garments stained with blood from self-inflicted wounds, the priests become desperate. With unabated frenzy they now mingle with their pleading terrible cursings of their sun-god, and Elijah continues to watch intently; for he knows that if by any device the priests should succeed in kindling their altar fire, he would instantly be torn in pieces. (*PK 150.1, 2*)

God cannot use men who, in time of peril, when the strength, courage, and influence of all are needed, are afraid to take a firm stand for the right. He calls for men who will do faithful battle against wrong, warring against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. **It is to such as these** that He will speak the words: “Well done, good and faithful servant; ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Matthew 25:23.  
(PK 142.2)