



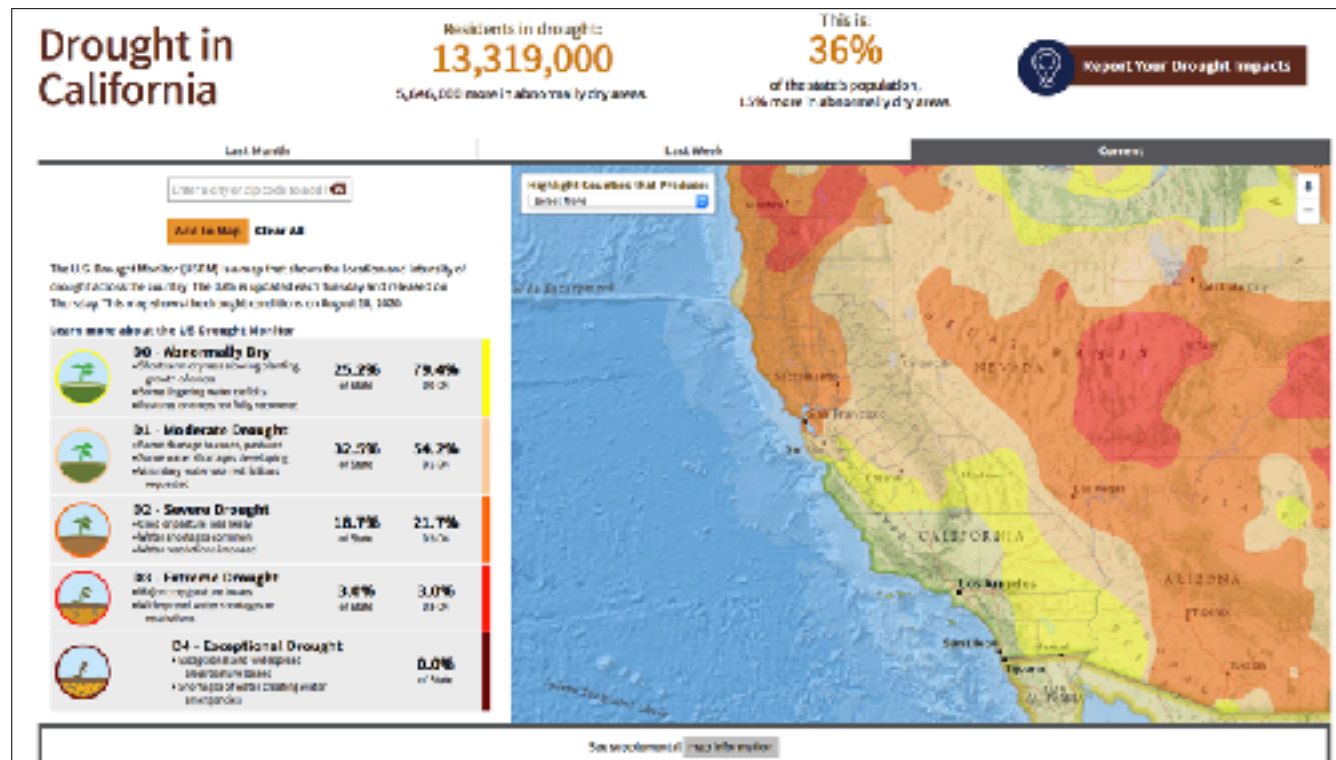
Man's Power Of Choice

God has no policeman to pass around and grab us by the neck and say you must read your Bible, or you must go to Church, or you must give to Missions. When God created man, He made man superior to all other creatures. He gave man the power and privilege of CHOICE. Up to now the Lord respects that privilege. He will not force us. With that privilege of Choice, goes the terrible responsibility of abiding by the results or consequences of our choices.

Tan, P. L. (1996, c1979). Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations : A treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers. Garland TX: Bible Communications.



We have experienced drought here in California, and we know what the dry earth yields, the smoke from recent fires wafts above our heads, and the ash falls everywhere around us.



drought.gov gives us these statistics regarding our state's condition

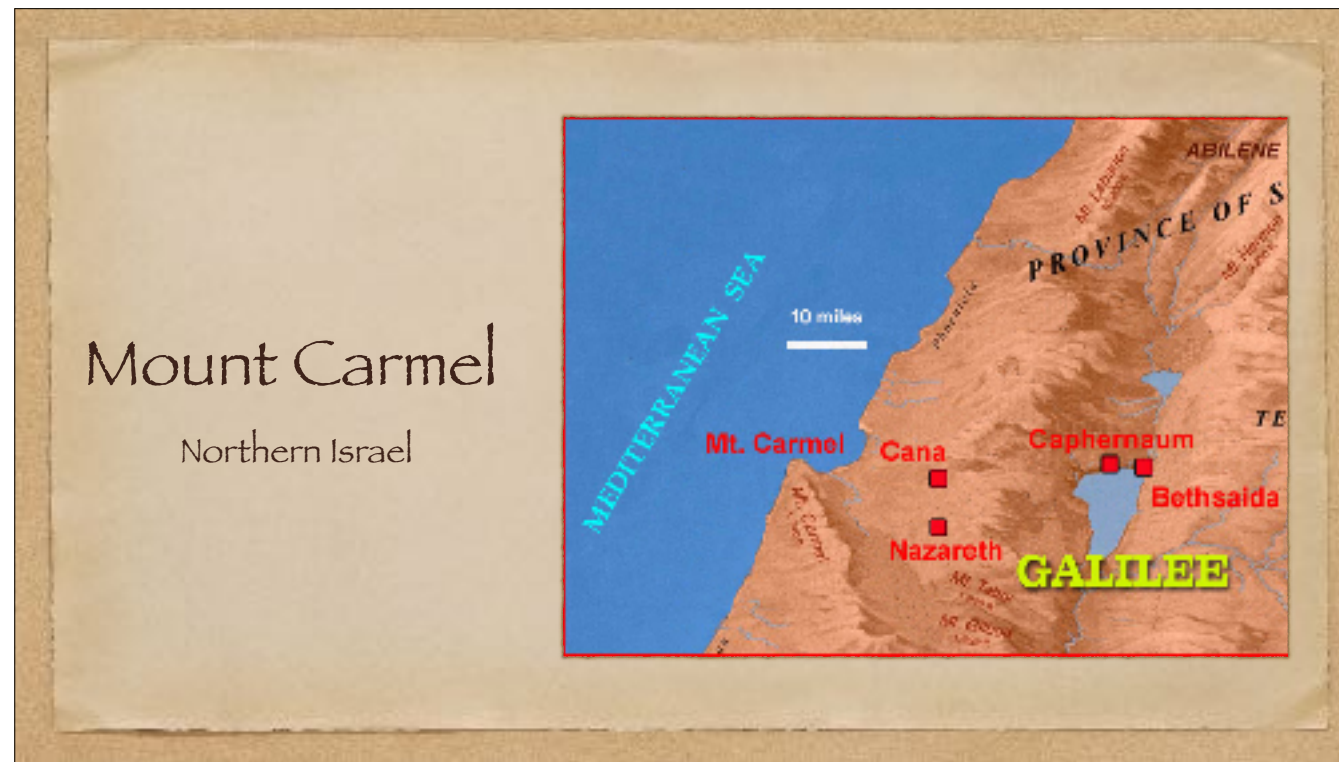


California Fires - Smoke seen from space August 20, 2020



Lone Cypress at Carmel by the Sea - Monterey, CA

Meaningful place for our family as we visited there in 2004 and John, my future brother-in-law, proposed to his girlfriend, Denny on a rainy December day. A key decision was made that day and Denny chose to spend her life with John.



The Carmel range sits on the coast of Israel between the Mediterranean Sea & the Sea of Galilee. Appointed to the tribe of Manasseh



“Carmel” - Hebrew for “garden” or “orchard.” The highest summit is 1,742 ft. (c. 531 m.) above sea level, but the promontory at the western end rises to only 556 ft. (c. 170 m.). - SDABD

“Carmel overlooked a wide expanse of country; its heights were visible from many parts of the kingdom of Israel.” PK 143

“Mt. Carmel, once a place of great scenic beauty, with its idol temples in flourishing groves, was now a place of desolation. Trees stood gaunt and bare, springs were dry, and flowers were no more. The gods of fertility had sadly failed their worshipers, and they had failed themselves. Their own shrines were places of vexation and dishonor. Here on these grounds consecrated to pagan shrines, once so beautiful, now so barren and forlorn, Elijah proposed to demonstrate the utter folly of the worship of Baal.” - SDABC “There are dwarf oaks, wild olive trees, and junipers on the slopes of Mount Carmel, and many cisterns and wine and oil presses show its ancient fertility.” - SDABD

It is a designated as a world heritage sight, not because of it’s biblical history, but for it’s contribution to evolutionary science, in an ironic way.

Elijah Confronts the King

1 Kings 18:17-19



“When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is this you, you troubler of Israel?” He said, “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and you have followed the Baals. “Now then send and gather to me all Israel at Mount Carmel, together with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.”” (1 Kings 18:17–19 NAS95)

“The command was issued by one who seemed to stand in the very presence of Jehovah; and Ahab obeyed at once, as if the prophet were monarch, and the king a subject.” - PK 143

Ugaritic Baal Myth

- ♦ “The Myth of Baal is one of the longest literary works of the western Semitic peoples in the second millennium BC. It begins with a conflict over kingship between Baal, the storm god and Yam, the sea god.” - Archaeological Study Bible pg. 905



The Baal Cycle, the most famous of the Ugaritic texts, displayed in the Louvre

“The Myth of Baal is one of the longest literary works of the western Semitic peoples in the second millennium BC. It begins with a conflict over kingship between Baal, the storm god and Yam, the sea god.” - Archaeological Study Bible pg. 905

◆ “The altars erected to the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth stood now in leafless groves. On the summit of one of the highest ridges, in sharp contrast with these was the broken-down altar of Jehovah.” - Prophets & Kings pg. 143

“The altars erected to the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth stood now in leafless groves. On the summit of one of the highest ridges, in sharp contrast with these was the broken-down altar of Jehovah.” - Prophets & Kings pg. 143



“So Ahab sent a message among all the sons of Israel and brought the prophets together at Mount Carmel.”
(1 Kings 18:20 NAS95)

- ◆ “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.” Prophets & Kings pg. 144

“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.” Prophets & Kings pg. 144



“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.” (1 Kings 18:21 NAS95)

- ♦ “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?” - Prophets & Kings pg. 144

“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?” - Prophets & Kings pg. 144



“Then Elijah said to the people, “I alone am left a prophet of the LORD, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men. “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.”Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, He is God.” And all the people said, “That is a good idea.””
(1 Kings 18:22–24 NAS95)



“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.” 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.” (1 Kings 18:25–26 NAS95)

- ◆ “When the prophets of Baal cut themselves with swords and lances to arouse Baal to action, Elijah needed only to call upon the name of Yahweh for Him to act on behalf of His servant and demonstrate that He is indeed the one and only true God.” - Archaeological Study Bible on 1 Kings 18

“Self-mutilation is an indicator of spiritual decadence. In the Baal myth the deities ‘Ilu and ‘Anatu mourn the death of the divine Baal by scraping their skin with sharp stones, cutting their faces with razors and thoroughly mutilating their own bodies. Like the gods they worshipped, the Canaanites also marred their bodies in mourning rituals and other religious ceremonies in an attempt to invoke their deities.” - Archaeological Study Bible



“It came about at noon, that Elijah mocked 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.” So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them. When midday was past, they raved until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice; but there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention.”

(1 Kings 18:27–29 NAS95)

- ◆ “Such exhibitions are said at times to have been accompanied by manifestations of demoniacal power, and undoubtedly it was hoped that by such means fire might be secured. But the Lord intervened. Satan and his angels were held in leash, and no fire appeared.” - SDABC

“Such exhibitions are said at times to have been accompanied by manifestations of demoniacal power, and undoubtedly it was hoped that by such means fire might be secured. But the Lord intervened. Satan and his angels were held in leash, and no fire appeared.” - SDABC



“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 149

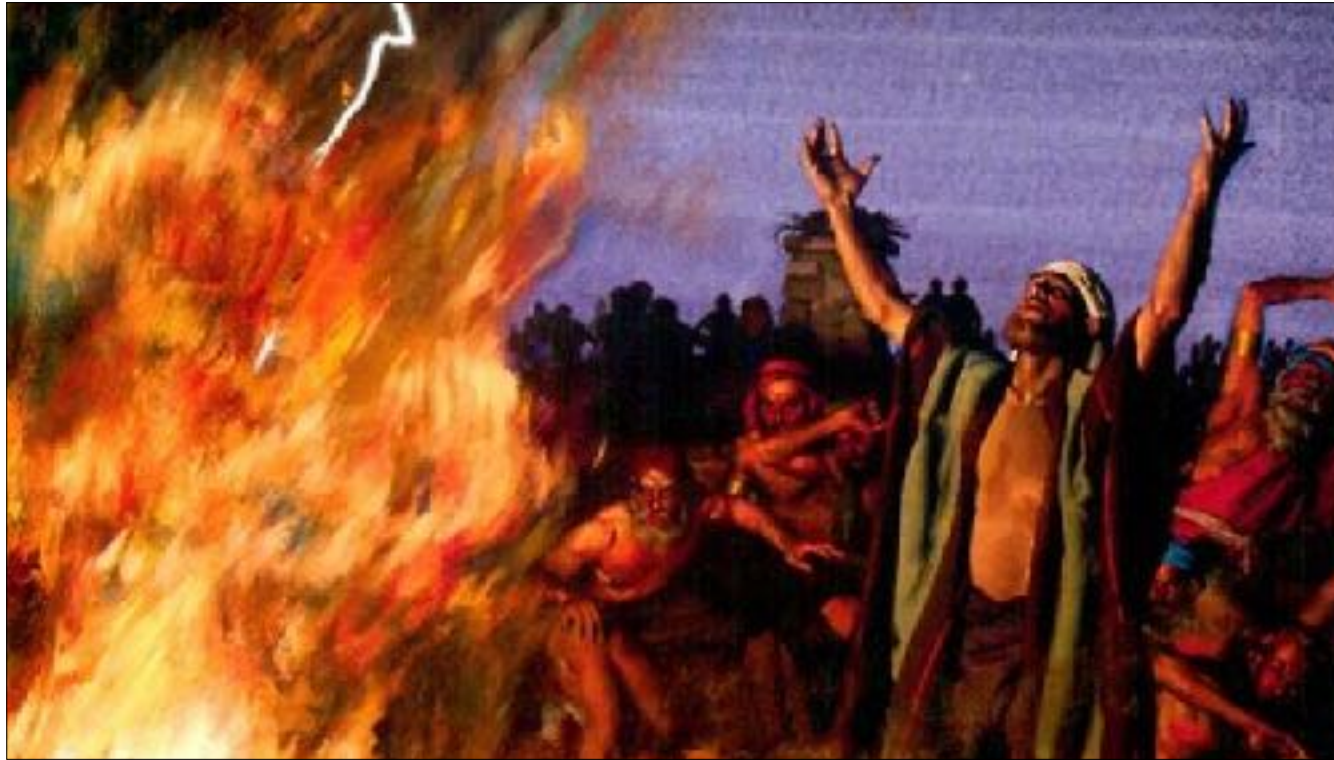


It is the hour of the evening sacrifice, and Elijah bids the people, “Come near unto me.” As they tremblingly draw near, he turns to the broken-down altar where once men worshiped the God of heaven, and repairs it. To him this heap of ruins is more precious than all the magnificent altars of heathendom. - PK 150

The mountain formation is an admixture of limestone and flint, containing many caves, and covered in several volcanic rocks. - Cheyne and Black, Encyclopedia Biblica

“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 of seed. Then he arranged the wood and cut the ox in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, “Fill four pitchers with water and pour 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. The water flowed around the altar and he also filled the trench with water.” (1 Kings 18:32–35 NAS95)

Where did they get the water during the drought? The area of Carmel had natural springs where they were able to get the water to cover the sacrifice.



“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. “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.” 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 Kings 18:36–38 NAS95)



“No sooner is the prayer of Elijah ended than flames of fire, like brilliant flashes of lightning, descend from heaven upon the upreared altar, consuming the sacrifice, licking up the water in the trench, and consuming even the stones of the altar. The brilliancy of the blaze illumines the mountain and dazzles the eyes of the multitude. In the valleys below, where many are watching in anxious suspense the movements of those above, the descent of fire is clearly seen, and all are amazed at the sight. It resembles the pillar of fire which at the Red Sea separated the children of Israel from the Egyptian host.” - Prophets & Kings pg. 152



“Then Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape.” So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.” (1 Kings 18:40 NAS95)

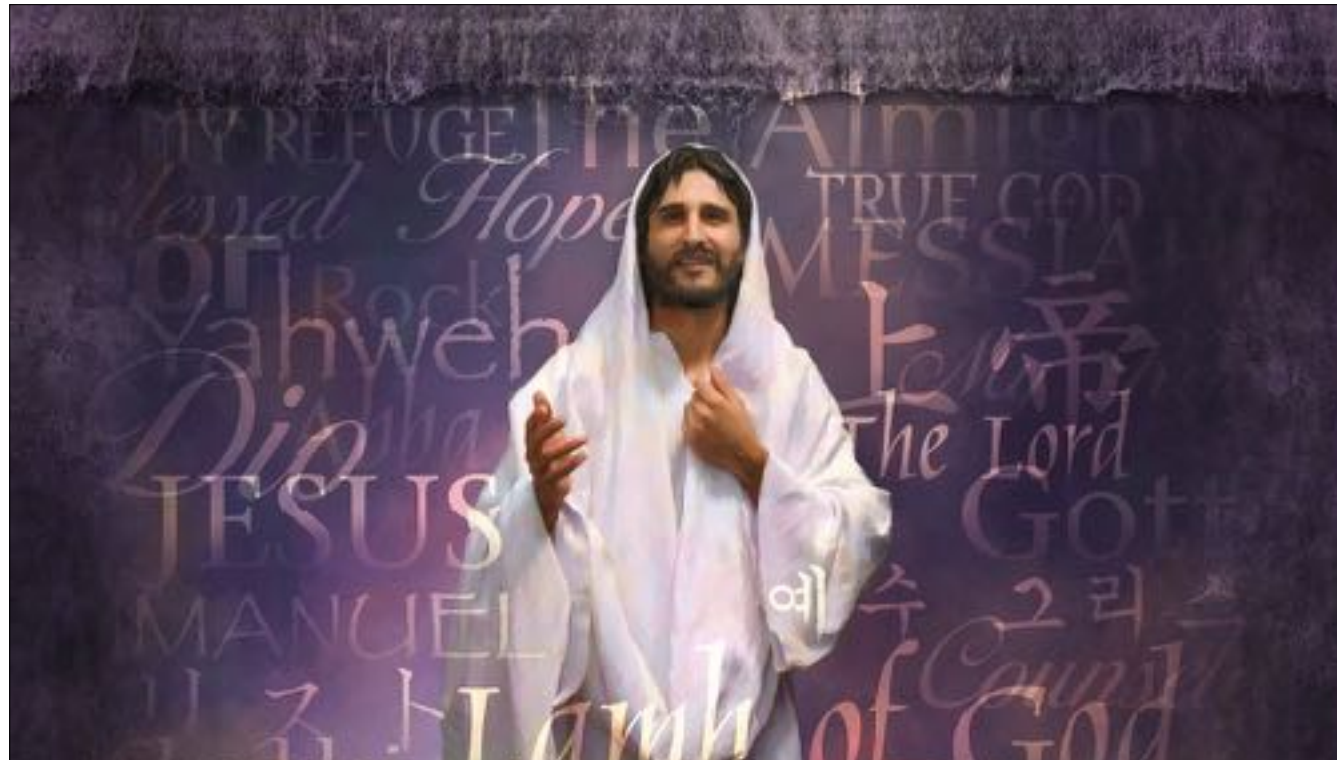
“As a result of the wonderful manifestations of that day the multitude had acknowledged the fact that Jehovah is God—all except the priests of Baal, who had refused to repent. Elijah’s summary execution of these priests was a fearful vengeance, but it was necessary and showed God’s indignation against those who persist in rebellion, and who are willing to corrupt and demoralize an entire people for selfish ends. The sentence against them served both as an example and a warning. God is not to be trifled with, and a terrible retribution awaits all who will sell their souls for the corruption of the world.” - SDABC

- ◆ “They had committed the highest crime against the state and the people by introducing idolatry, and bringing down God’s judgments upon the land; therefore their lives were forfeited to that law which had ordered every idolater to be slain. It seems also that Ahab, who was present, consented to this act of impartial justice.” - Adam Clarke

“They had committed the highest crime against the state and the people by introducing idolatry, and bringing down God’s judgments upon the land; therefore their lives were forfeited to that law which had ordered every idolater to be slain. It seems also that Ahab, who was present, consented to this act of impartial justice.” - Adam Clarke



“Baal's prophets had been slain. The whole people of Israel had been deeply stirred, and many were returning to the worship of God.” - ED 60



Auction Of Lady Anna

A street-preacher was preaching on one of London’s sidewalks when a personal servant of the queen, a woman by the name of Lady Anna, passed by in a gorgeous carriage. She stopped to listen.

The crowd turned its attention to her. So did the speaker. In a voice loud enough for all to hear, he exclaimed: “Brethren, may I have your attention a moment. I am going to have an auction. I intend to sell that young lady to the highest bidder. I know of three who want to buy her: the World, the Devil, and Christ.

“World, what will you pay for her? Riches, honor, and pleasure? Not enough. She is worth more. Devil, what will you bid? All the possessions and riches of this earth? Not enough! Riches disappear like the night when the morning sun comes up.

“I hear the voice of the third Buyer, Jesus Christ. What do you bid, Lord Jesus?” “I give her my grace here and eternal glory hereafter, an imperishable, unstained, unchangeable inheritance!”

“Lord, You may have her,” shouted the speaker, “I leave her to You. You are the rightful Owner. May Heaven and earth witness this deal.”

Then, turning to the surprised and embarrassed young lady, the speaker went on: “What do you think of this bargain? Remember, you are eternally the property of the Lord Jesus. He died for you. Can you, will you, dare you, refuse to surrender to Him?”

To her credit, Lady Anna took the words to heart, and lived worthy of her Master.

Tan, P. L. (1996, c1979). Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations : A treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers. Garland TX: Bible Communications.



Appeal Prayer - "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

(Romans 12:1–2 NAS95)