

God's prophet did convert souls that day; they just weren't Baal's prophets. When Elijah was done impugning the false god, the prophets of Baal doubled down! *"So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them"* (28). Their stupidity was relentless, so, when the contest was complete, God having decisively won, Elijah personally executed the prophets of Baal (40). The Carmel challenge was not intended to persuade those whose hearts were already hard.

Rather, the challenge was meant to convince the observers. It was to *"all the people,"* meaning the general population of Israel, that Elijah asked, *"How long will you falter between two opinions? If Jehovah is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him"* (21). These were the ones whose minds he set out to change. And change they did!

Elijah didn't spend half the day's light hopping around, shouting out to God, and cutting himself like Baal's buffoons did. Instead, he spent most of his time making the sacrifice harder to burn, so that when it happened, its authenticity would be unassailable. He ordered a trench dug around the altar and then had the offering drenched in twelve pots of water, following that up with filling the trench itself (33-35). After that, he uttered a simple prayer, lasting a mere 41 words in Hebrew (36-37).

God responded with fire that not only consumed the bull sacrifice, but also devoured the wood to kindle it, the stones of the altar, the water that soaked it all and filled the trench, and even the dust (38)! *"When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'Jehovah, He is God! Jehovah, He is God!'"* (39). That was the goal! It was what Elijah prayed for: *"Let it be known this day that You are God"* (36) and *"that this people may know that You are Jehovah God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again"* (37).

Contemptuously mocking falsehood is unlikely to win over the hard-hearted deceivers who are committed to their error, but such are never the target audience anyway. Jesus taught, *"Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces"* (Matthew 7:6). Mockery may, however, open the eyes of the undecided. If coupled with a demonstration of truth contrasted to error, a bit of scorn, revealing the absurdity of a given falsehood, can go a long way toward winning minds. It is right, after all, to expose the unfruitful works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11).

SUGARMAN WARNED THEM

Gardner Hall

On the evening of March 29th, 1939, torrential rains washed out a bridge on US Route 80, between Jackson and Vicksburg, Mississippi. An African American man with a commanding presence named Andrew Daniel, nicknamed "Sugarman," lived near the bridge and quickly became aware of the danger. He ran out onto the highway and desperately tried to warn motorists of the danger, but, unfortunately, most of them paid no attention to him, going over the void to their deaths. The final number of casualties was 15 dead.

After the erection of a temporary barrier, Daniel continued working tirelessly through the night and during the following days to recover the bodies of the motorists who had ignored him. He was over six feet tall and weighed about 270 pounds possessing remarkable strength. Other rescuers were so impressed with "Sugarman's" heroics, that they passed the hat to take up a collection for him and were able to give him \$44, worth about \$800 today. Sugarman spent the rest of his life as a loved and respected member of his community of Edwards, Mississippi. Those who knew him, passed on the story of his heroism to their offspring. He received his nickname, Sugarman, from the sweets he constantly gave to the children. Years after Daniel's death in 1969, the State of Mississippi decided to honor his courage by naming a portion of Route 80 in his honor.

Today, disciples of the Lord watch with alarm as many of their friends and family members continue recklessly in their lives toward disaster, giving little or no thanks to God nor attention to his word. They fill their lives with triviality and often give in to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. We try to warn them of the danger of being governed by their feelings and worldly pursuits: in the short run, empty lives, and in the long term, eternal separation from God. However, most pay little attention and proceed blithely on their way to ruin.

We grieve their loss, but, like Sugarman, can't take the time to stop and mourn because others are coming down the same road after them and need warning. Jesus predicted that it would be this way. Only a few are of good ground. Only a few seek the narrow way that leads to life. But we must keep warning, through our lives that reflect God's love and our tactful but urgent pleas to follow Him. We won't be considered heroes by this world but will be rewarded by our heavenly Father. And that's all that matters!

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.

Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS..."**

RESTORE SUCH A ONE"

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN**

SETTINGS OF SILVER"

PROVERBS 25:11

"Men of genius are admired,
men of wealth are envied,
men of power are feared,
but only
men of character are trusted."

– Zig Ziglar

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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"ELIJAH MOCKED THEM"

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Atop Mount Carmel, the Israelites gathered to witness a contest between Elijah, the prophet of the Most High God, and 450 prophets of Baal (1st Kings 18:19-20). The challenge was to prepare one bull in sacrifice to Baal and another to Jehovah, but to light no fire beneath the offerings, leaving it to the respective deity to accept it by sending fire from heaven to consume the bull (22-24).

After Baal's prophets spent six hours calling on their god and leaping around the altar (26), the Man of God had enough. *"Elijah mocked them, saying, 'Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened'"* (27 ESV). Among the common translations, the English Standard Version is most straightforward with *"relieving himself."* Elijah provided several reasons Baal might be inattentive to his prophets, including an extended visit to the toilet! He regarded their idol with nothing but contempt and manifestly scorned their misplaced faith.

Those today who would similarly regard blatant spiritual falsehood with ridicule are quickly chastened by their own brethren who insist such derision is unloving and will fail to win souls. Nevertheless, the example of Elijah abides and his behavior is worthy of serious consideration.

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