



## **Where is Mount Carmel, and why is it so important?**

This ancient and sacred mountain is a place of enormous significance for the Church.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom...  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
—Isaiah 35:1-2

Located in the north of Israel with western slopes that descend into the Mediterranean Sea, Mount Carmel National Park is a picturesque spot. It might inspire you to grab a packed lunch and your sunglasses, a picnic blanket and a copy of a good book.



A view of the Mediterranean from Mount Carmel

Actually, bring the Good Book, and open to the First Book of Kings. Here, in the eighteenth chapter, you'll read about an amazing thing that happened right under your feet on Mount Carmel.

Back then (9th century B.C.), Israel was in trouble (again) for following a false god. This time it was Baal, whose worship was promoted—often violently—by King Ahab under the influence of his nasty wife Jezebel. Israel was afflicted with three years of famine because of its faithlessness.

So the Lord instructed Elijah to challenge the pagan prophets to a test, to show everyone who was the true God.

These were the rules: Baal's prophets and Elijah would each set up a sacrifice to their respective deities, call upon him, then wait to see what would happen. Whichever god answered with fire was the true God.

We probably don't need to tell you who won. Baal's prophets were met with silence from their god, but Elijah was answered with fire from heaven that consumed his sacrifice.

Later in history, near the end of the 12th century A.D., the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel—the Carmelites—was founded here. They would be driven repeatedly from their original habitation due to external conflicts in the volatile region, but always managed to come back, and can be found there today.

Moreover, being driven from their home had a wonderful effect: it contributed to the order's spread to Europe, where it became one of the most significant orders in the Church. Its sons and daughters include St. Teresa of Ávila, St. John of the Cross, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

Through the Carmelites, Our Lady gave us one of her most popular devotions: the Brown Scapular. She promised that those who wore it would "not suffer eternal fire." So if you're wearing the Brown Scapular, you're a little bit Carmelite, and have a tangible connection to the ancient and holy mountain of Carmel.

If you're *not* wearing the Brown Scapular, let's fix that! All you need to do is get a scapular and ask your parish priest to enroll you. The Catholic Company can help with the first part. We offer a [beautiful handmade wool scapular](#), with a petite crucifix and St. Benedict medal attached. A perfect first scapular or replacement for an aging one. [Order yours today!](#)