

## 2145 - GODLY OBADIAH - 1 Kin 18:1-16

PRELIMS. We want with God's help to look this morning a little at Elijah but mainly at **Godly Obadiah**. But need to know the **context** to appreciate his service to the Lord. He lived during the reign of wicked King **Ahab** of Israel. Elijah had told Ahab 'No rain until I say so'! There already **had been** 6 months 'no rain'! Then God removes Elijah into **hiding** to a Brook. So *the famine was severe* [2] King Ahab is **hunting for** Elijah - but he cannot be found!

### **The MAN OBADIAH**

We read *After many days...in the third year* of famine. It probably **felt** longer than it was for **both** Elijah and Ahab! God is **never** in a **hurry**. He took a whole week to creation when He could have done the lot in **one second flat!** He planned, rested, enjoyed, rejoiced! Neither should Xns rush *He that believes will not act hastily* [Isa 28:16 NKJV]! It is **Satan** that acts suddenly and quickly!

*the Word of the Lord came to Elijah: 'Go...'* Elijah never moves without God telling him! Everything E did, he did on God's orders! *I have done all these things at Your Word* [36] Like Israelites in desert *At the command of the LORD the people of Israel set out and at the command of the LORD they camped* [Nu 9:18]. **APP** Of course, we need to **avoid extremes**. We can sit and do nothing **claiming** to be 'waiting on God' when the **real reason** is **laziness** and **unwillingness** to do what has **already** been **commanded** in Scripture and our **duty**.

God's Word is **sufficient** for **all** situations and **all** circumstances. We today have a **full record** of all God wants us to know regarding **decision making** and **everything** regarding our **duty** and the **exercise** of our faith. The **principles** behind God's Word are **for all generations** in all **cultures** and are **still relevant** and **valid for** today! We do **not need** anything more - God does **not want** His people to be **lazy** or **careless** about living by **faith** - but He wants them to be **trusting/believing** in what He has **already revealed**.

God now tells E, who has been very obedient and hidden himself, **Go show yourself to Ahab and I will send rain on the earth** [1] Notice again: God **doesn't** give much **details** – His commands are usually

**general.** We have to ‘**work out**’ many of the **details** ourselves. *Come over to Macedonia and help us* – when, how, where, do I take my team? **How** was Elijah to present himself to Ahab? God ‘provided’ the answer in due course – **after** he took the **first** few steps. It was to be via this man **Obadiah!** (He’s **not** the Obadiah in Scripture Book!)

Now some people find Obadiah an **enigma!** I don’t. Some wonder how he could possibly ‘work’ for such an ungodly household, King Ahab! Helping a wicked king in his wickedness? Well, how many of **us** have had **strong Xn** employers who ran their businesses in a **completely Xn** way? Many Xn employers are themselves ‘**mixed up**’ with unbelievers in directorships/committees, etc. Now Xns are **in** the world **to be** the **salt** and **light** by their **example** and **wisdom**. We simply cannot affect/improve/witness to the world unless we **make contact** with the world! When Xns are asked to do something against the Word they should’t do it. However, to accept well earned wages for **honourable work** from an unbeliever is not wrong.

Obadiah *feared the Lord greatly* [3]. He was not just a believer, but a **devout** believer! There is a **difference!** You can have **weak** faith, you can have **wavering** faith, and you can have **strong** faith. But it is all faith and if it is **saving** (ie, in the Lord Jesus Christ for personal salvation) the **smallest** amount **will** save to **uttermost!**

But there was something else other than faith, which made Obadiah great which we need to take note of in the UK. He **demonstrated** his **love** to God by **taking risks** for the **Lord!** Risks for his **very life!**

Look: *when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water* [4] Isn’t that wonderful? He not only rescued them and provided a hiding place, he found and brought food/water to them! That was **very risky!** If caught, his head would come off!

How do we know Obadiah was good man? *By their fruits you shall know them.* **Not** by their **knowledge** or their **theology**, but the kind of fruit that comes from their lives! How many of us can testify to similar fruit as Obadiah? *A cup of cold water* for a saint is so important to Jesus! **APP** What are **you/I** doing in regards to providing for the persecuted saints in around the world? Syria, Iraq,

Nigeria, Eritrea, Sudan former Soviet nations? Are we even praying enough? **Oskar Schindler** the German industrialist, was credited with saving over 1,1000 Jews during the **Holocaust** by employing them in his enamel ware/ammunitions factories in Poland/CzechRep!

Obadiah was **recognised** by Ahab as a good fellow to have working for him. Ahab put him *over the household* [3] and no one, including Ahab puts ‘**duffers**’ in responsible positions! Remember **Joseph**? He was put in charge in Potiphar’s house! Why? Because he was **reliable, honest, punctual, excellent**. Everyone wants that type of worker – no matter their faith. Faith in Christ of course is important – but Xn faith **supports** all those excellent qualities that businessmen and statesmen desperately need. Honesty, reliability, efficiency are actually **commands** from God to His people! Read OT & NT! Every Xn should seek to be **top** at his calling! People **notice** good workmanship – *The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man...His master SAW that the Lord was with him and that the Lord caused all that he did to succeed in his hands* [Gen 38:2,3]

Not that Obadiah is a **perfect saint** – no! Look: In God’s **providence** he unexpectedly meets Elijah! Obadiah can’t believe his eyes *Is it you my lord Elijah?*[7] Yes *It is I. Go tell your lord ‘Behold Elijah is here’* [8]. You must be **joking**! Despite the **assurance** that God is with Obadiah, he is **filled with fear**! Like Elijah himself in a few days time, will fear before Jezebel - Obadiah **just fears** to go to King Ahab and tell him he knows exactly where Elijah is!

*How have I sinned, that you would give your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me?* What have I done to deserve this treatment? Obadiah says he will lose his head if he goes back to Ahab and simply say ‘Elijah is here’! Ahab will think I knew where you were all the time – and to make matters worse, if I did go and then come back for you, lo and behold you will have done one of your **disappearing tricks** (I know it would be the Lord’s angel who would carry you) but **my head** would still **roll**!

Obadiah explains, that Ahab has left **no stone unturned** in looking for Elijah *there is no nation or kingdom where my lord has not sent to seek you* [10] You are ‘a wanted man’! All the **intelligent forces**

are out looking for you, the **security forces** as well and the **SAS!** Sorry Elijah, I couldn't do it! It would be blatant **suicide!** **APP** We can all **identify** with Obadiah in one way or another. And **yet.....** this *Obadiah was able to hide 100 prophets secretly at great risk!! How temperamental/capricious Xn faith can be? One day they can do great things, the next they 'faint' at a smaller request!*

Now Obadiah was **unwilling** to go to Ahab, **perhaps** because he was a **secret disciple** – if so Elijah wanted Obadiah to **go public** with his faith! Elijah **insisted** - and *Obadiah went to meet Ahab* [16]

So here we have two **different** types of **ministries**. Elijah's is **public** and **confrontational!** Obadiah's is **behind the scenes!** Elijah is a **loner**, but he does wonderful work. Obadiah is a **people person** and did a wonderful work. Both are serving the Lord and both have their own **risks!** Both are **necessary!** Paul said *There are different kinds of gifts but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service but the same Lord*[1C12:4]! *the same Spirit...distributing to each one individually as He wills* [1C12:11] But all of us needs to go on to **maturity and growth!** We **all** need **improvement/development!**

**APP** Which type of Xn are **you?** Seek more grace/wisdom/courage!

**Weak** faith **behind** the scenes? God has called **every believer** into **some** service. You are made different from me – for a reason – for a **spiritual** reason! You **must do** the work God has **planned** for you - in the situation you are in, in the circumstances God has placed you. Seek the courage/strength and pray for it.

**APP** The **Great Example** of course is **Jesus Christ** who never failed when tested and **consistently** served His Father. **Think of Jesus!** He **operated** in **both public** and 'behind the scenes'. Jesus **feared!** *He was heard because He feared/reverence* [Heb 5:7] **Fear** itself of course, is not a weakness - it is an **emotion** - it is **how we deal** with fear that determines our faith/obedience. Fear is **not** fear if no **threat!** *Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence* [Heb 5:7] Let us go forward...*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do* [Eph 2:10].