

Elijah meets God's Servant Obadiah

CHAPTER 18.

^c Elijah meeteth Obadiah. ¹⁷ He reproveth Ahab. ⁴⁰ Baal's prophets slain. ⁴² Elijah, by prayer, obtaineth rain.

AND it came to pass *after* ^k many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and ^l I will send rain upon the earth.

² And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And *there* was a sore famine in Samaria.

³ And Ahab called ^o Obadiah, which was ^p the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly:

⁴ For it was so, when ^q Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

Heb 11v38: Dens and caves

v3-6 The Faithfulness of Obadiah

v3 Obadiah is in a similar situation to **Joseph** here. It is a difficult one, but he keeps his faith in God and uses his position to advance God's purpose. We are often faced with challenging and uncomfortable circumstances in life. Are we as faithful as Obadiah? Are we prepared to **take risks** for the **sake of Christ**? Obadiah risked his life!

v4 This is the first recorded instance of **persecution of the saints** by a government authority. Jezebel's reign typified the Roman Catholic apostasy which persecuted the saints down through the ages.

This persecution is said to be for a symbolic period of **3 ½ years: Rev 13v5-10**. God's saints are described as "the holy city" who are **trodden under foot for 42 months: Rev 11v2**. When Rome falls after Christ's return, it is said that "in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth": **Rev 18v24**.

Similarities between Elijah and the Lord Jesus Christ:

They were both sent by God to Israel. Jesus came at a time of great Spiritual drought: **Isa 53v1-2**. Elijah preached the gospel to the poor, as Jesus did: **Isa 61v1-2**. When the Scribes and Pharisees were parched and dry from the Word of God, the Lord was helping the poor and the widows. **They are both coming back to finish that work.**

Who did Elijah meet first on his return? **Obadiah!** Obadiah's name means "**the servant of Yahweh**". Christ is coming to God's servants first when he returns: **1 Pet 4v17**. The saints will be a cloud of witnesses in the political heavens, to bring refreshing rains upon the mown grass after the thunders and lightning of Armageddon: **Psa 72v6; Isa 17v12-14; Heb 12v1; Rev 1v7; 11v18-19; 16v18-21**.

v1-2 God sends Elijah to Ahab

v1 A very unwelcome message for Elijah. Now his life is at risk. Elijah however acts **immediately** and without question, showing great **faith** and determination.

The 3rd year - Most likely just over 2 years from being with the widow of Zarephath.

Rain - Elijah was the rain! He was the manifestation of Yahweh's Word in the nation. Rain represents God's Word: **Isa 55v9-11; Deut 32v1-3; 2 Sam 23v4; Psa 72v6**. The coming of **Christ with his Saints** will be like the refreshing rain upon a parched earth. Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh, the very embodiment of God's Word and purpose.

v6 At a time of crisis, Ahab could only trust Obadiah. What a testimony to the faithfulness of this man! Are we like this at work?

v7-16 Elijah meets Obadiah

Elijah is very intolerant of this wonderfully faithful servant. Elijah answers Obadiah roughly. He assumes that Obadiah's "lord" is Ahab when it is really Yahweh. Obadiah however had associated himself with Elijah. Tragically Elijah then went to Carmel in **1 Kgs 18** and said "I only remain" (**v22**). Elijah forgot that there were another 101 faithful prophets – Obadiah plus the 100 hidden. There was still much for Elijah to learn. But God was with him all the way and worked with him.

v10 Imagine Ahab going to all the nations and kingdoms, asking for Elijah. But of all places he is found in Jezebel's home town!

v12 Obadiah was faithful to his God, following in his footsteps of Christ in a time of great suffering and trial: **1 Pet 2v19-25**. He is a faithful servant in his workplace: **Eph 6v5-8**.

v15 A significant change as Elijah now uses the militant title of God: **Yahweh of Armies** (previously **Yahweh Elohim** in **1 Kings 17v1, 14,20,21**). Now he is about to reveal himself to Ahab

5 And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, ² that we lose not all the beasts.

6 So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

7 ¶ And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, *Art thou that my lord Elijah?*

8 And he answered him, *I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.*

9 And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?

10 As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, *He is not there*; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.

11 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

12 And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that ^m the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.

13 Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?

14 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me.

15 And Elijah said, ^o As the

LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day. **16** So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

Think what Elijah could have done to comfort Obadiah:

In a time of great trial, Elijah could have been a source of strength and encouragement for God's Servant. When times are difficult **we need to be there** for our brothers and sisters.

Isa 42v1-4 "a bruised reed shall he not break" - Jesus came to **comfort and repair** the weak, not break them.

Isa 50v4-6 Jesus Christ listened morning by morning to his Father to prepare him to **speak a word in season to those that are weary**. That's what Obadiah desperately needed from Elijah.

Heb 10v23-25 **Encourage** one another more and more as we see Christ's return approaching.

2 Tim 1v15-18 Onesiphorus gave strength and **encouragement** to Paul when all others had left him.

Phil 2v22 Paul was like a **father** to Timothy to encourage him. Elijah needed to become a **father** for Israel in a time of great trial.

John 10v2-4 Jesus knows all his sheep **by name**. He takes a personal interest in all his sheep. Elijah had not yet learnt this lesson. But God would teach him.

Colour code: Blue (God & Jesus); Red (sin/devil/judgment of wicked); Green (Kingdom); Orange (important words & phrases); Purple (return of Jews to the land); Yellow (practical exhortation). Prepared for Study Week 2008.

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