

"thy God" (v. 10), but the prophet responds by speaking of the Lord of armies (so the word "hosts" in v. 15). A promise of appearance was given and this satisfied the terrified Obadiah. This led to Obadiah's obedience and his becoming a link in the mighty challenge of Elijah to Ahab (v. 16).

CONCLUSION

We may be one of many by the same name, but if we truly know the Lord in saving faith our lives, like Obadiah's, will evidence obedience to God, Oh, isn't the God of Elijah glorious? Say a hearty "amen" and give Him His glory!

BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES ON Elijah

"Elijah Meets Obadiah"

1 Kings 18:1-16

INTRODUCTION

1. The experiences of Elijah were very broad. He was thrown into contact with a variety of men with a view to the fulfillment of the purpose of God.
2. The man whom Elijah met as recorded in this chapter is one of about 13 who is named Obadiah. His position was elevated in the government of King Ahab. He was, in fact, one over the house of the King. As such he was a confidant of the highest order of the day. Something similar to a presidential advisor.
3. The contact with Elijah reveals a number of qualities of Obadiah. They evince some strong contrasts with the prophet and indicate some precious spiritual lessons. Give your heart to the attention of the following:

1. HE KNEW THE LORD

a. Stated. The Spirit of God affirms that Obadiah knew the Lord (v. 3). What a testimony to possess. This is the same blessed witness which He gives to every waiting heart (1 John 5:9-13).

b. Timed. Some deny the possibility of the young to really know the Lord. But there it is in your Bible as a personal testimony from Obadiah: "fear the Lord from my youth" (v. 12). The name Obadiah means "servant of Jehovah" or "worshipper of Jehovah." Very likely his parents were godly (cf. 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14, 15). Early in his life he came to know the reality of the living God on the basis of faith. That's the best time to get to know Him (cf. Samuel, David, Josiah, Zechariah, Jeremiah). Here is a real reason for children and youth work!

c. Qualified. The verb "feared" is not to be taken lightly. It affirms that there was a real sense of awe in the heart of Obadiah for the Lord. The verb is used twice in this passage and means to give reverence and honor. Here it also means to trust and believe. Salvation is truly a part of the matter here. The genuineness of the attitude is shown by the adverb "greatly" (v. 3). This connotes intensity, zeal, and enthusiasm. There is no suggestion of half measures here. Words of degree similar to this are found elsewhere: "wholly" (Deut. 1:36), "earnestly" (Neh. 3:20-24), "much" (Rom. 16:12). "fervently" (Col. 4:12).

2. HE SERVED THE LORD

To know the Lord in a saving manner is the clinching item in eternal salvation. All through the Bible, it is a matter of faith which solidifies one's relationship with God (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3-5; 11:6). Faith alone realizes salvation. This sort of saving faith is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8, 9) and includes a turning away from all other modes or grounds of salvation (1 Thess. 2:9). The one act of faith forever solves the sin problem by the grace of God.

But this faith is a working faith! It produces fruit. It was so in the case of Abraham (Gen. 22). It was for Rahab also (James 2:25). Paul affirmed this truth (Eph. 2:8-10). Here Obadiah gave true evidence of his relationship with God by his forthright action in behalf of the prophets (vv. 4, 13). This was a noble deed. He was in a position to perform it. Others in the Word are recorded who did similar feats as evidence of their attachment to the Lord. (Joseph in Gen. 41:41; Daniel in Daniel 2:48; Mordecai in Esther 2:9; and the "saints" in Phil. 4:22).

No one can ever challenge the divine sovereignty in the salvation of a soul. No one would ever seek to tarnish the work of God in redeeming grace and love. However, the Word is equally firm in bringing to the attention of His own the carefulness of walking in grace (2 Pet. 2:10). In popular terms, Peter was enough of an Arminian so as to bring his Calvinism into a humble watchfulness. Divine grace never must be construed to teach carelessness (Titus 2:11, 12).

3. HE FAILED THE LORD

Perhaps this is not self-evident in the account, but one can surely uncover it in contrast with the might of Elijah's witness. The key phrase for the prophet of God in this section is "Go, show thyself unto Ahab. . ." (v. 1). It is just the opposite from his former command received from the Lord (1 Kings 17:3). God's men are to be open and known. Here is a man, Obadiah, who gave all too clear evidence that he was not providing the full output that he could. Mark the following items:-

a. He neglected opportunity. Nowhere does the text reveal that Obadiah withstood Ahab in his wickedness. Elijah did (1 Kings 17:1). An overt testimony would have been in order--even before the King! Years later, Ahab testified of another prophet who stood up to him

in his wickedness (1 Kings 21:25; 22: 7, 8). The Ahabs need scathing rebuke. If the Ahabs accuse you of troubling them, rejoice!

b. He demonstrated anxiety. Three times Obadiah expresses his fear of death from Ahab (vv. 9, 12, 14). The fear of man brings a snare (Prov. 29:25). If only Obadiah had his eye on the Lord and let his "lord" know of his sin! Elijah is a study in contrasts here. He was prepared to follow the will of God. Being a courtier to the King of Kings, he did not fear King Ahab! He stood before the Lord (v. 15 cf. 17:1). God's Elijahs see the mountains full of horses and chariots (2 Kings 6:15-17). The Obadias vow they cannot fulfill God's will!

c. He cooperated meekly. Perhaps nothing is so sad as what is recorded about Ahab and Obadiah. There was a severe famine in the land (v. 2) and this was due to the wickedness of the King and his cohorts. They should have been on their faces crying to God for their sins, but no--there they were seeking for grass (vv. 5, 6). It is incredible. With death lurking at every corner and a nation full of wickedness, all that the leadership (including Obadiah) could find to do was take care of mules and asses. Is this somewhat the picture today? How much is spent on dogs, cats, pleasures in comparison with the souls of men! The picture is so tragic and so fearful that the dread of divine judgment hangs as a pall over the whole sickening situation! God have mercy upon the world of madness!

4. HE OBEYED THE LORD

Obadiah followed the instructions of Ahab in connection with his search for grass (vv. 5, 6). It wasn't long before he came right in the path of Elijah (v. 7). This was all planned by a perfect God! The identification of Elijah was instantaneous (vv. 7, 8). What an impact a true servant of God had upon a man who acknowledged His servant. A number of responses came forth:

- a. Submission (v. 7)
- b. Confession (v. 8)
- c. Explanation (v. 10).
- d. Argumentation (vv. 10-14)

But what Obadiah needed was a word of assurance and he got it (v. 15). Obadiah referred Elijah to