

“Obadiah” - Delivered by E A Terry 3-10-19

Matthew 7: 21 – 23; Matthew 6: 19 – 24; **Mark 8: 34 – 38; 1st Kings 18: 1 – 19 (Sermon)**

This morning we are going to continue our study of Elijah The Prophet.

I want us to focus on the contrast of the three main characters in 1st Kings 18 - King Ahab, Elijah, and Obadiah.

First let's look at King Ahab. King Ahab was the 7th King of Israel.

1st Kings 16:30 tells us that ***“King Ahab did more evil in the sight of the Lord than any of those before him.”***

In addition King Ahab married Jezebel who was a devout worshipper of Baal.

So Ahab built altars to Baal and to Asherah.

According to 1st Kings 18, there were 450 prophets of Baal, and 400 prophets of the Asherah, who ate at Queen Jezebel's table.

During Ahab's reign idol worship was rampant in Israel.

God sent The Prophet Elijah to Ahab with a message that there would be no rain or dew in Israel for several years because of King Ahab's evil and adulterous ways and because Ahab led the people of Israel into idolatry.

Elijah's message of condemnation infuriated Ahab.

Since physical in The Bible always points to a spiritual truth God matched Israel's spiritual drought with a physical drought.

Elijah is one of the most known prophets.

Elijah obeyed God and Elijah served The One True God of Israel.

God gave Elijah supernatural power and throughout Elijah's ministry Elijah called the people of Israel to worship and to serve The One True Living God of Israel.

Elijah proved to the people of Israel that ***“The Lord is God”***. Elijah dedicated his life to serving God

After Elijah told King Ahab there would be a drought throughout Israel for several years God sent Elijah out into the wilderness where he would be safe from the angry King Ahab.

We looked at Elijah's character and how God provided for Elijah at the Brook of Cherith and in Zarephath on February 17th and 24th.

We do not know much about this man Obadiah except that Obadiah was King Ahab's Palace Administrator. (1st Kings 18:2)

Then in 1st Kings 18:2 – 4 we read two more things about Obadiah.

First; ***“Obadiah was a devout believer in The Lord.”***

Secondly ***“While Jezebel was killing off the LORD’s prophets, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water”.*** (1st Kings 18:4)

Obadiah remained a devout believer even when he worked in King Ahab’s palace.

When the famine in Israel got sever King Ahab and Obadiah went all through the land of Israel to search for grass to keep King Ahab’s horses and mules alive. (1st Kings 18:5)

In 1st Kings 18:6 we read; ***“So they divided the land they were to cover, Ahab going in one direction and Obadiah in another.”***

The fact that the king himself goes to search for grass shows us how desperate King Ahab was.

But more importantly, it tells us King Ahab cared more about his horses than he cared about the starving people of Israel.

Either Ahab did not remember Elijah’s message or Ahab did not fear God.

1st Kings 18:1 tells us that three years after Elijah confronted Ahab with his evil and idolatrous ways and announced that there would be no rain or dew in The Land of Israel, God sent Elijah back to Ahab with God’s message; ***“I will send rain on the land.”***

It was when Obadiah is out searching for grass for Ahab’s horses that Elijah met Obadiah.

Obadiah recognized Elijah, bowed to the ground, and said; “Is it really you, my lord Elijah.” (1st Kings 18:7)

Then in verse 8 Elijah said; ***“Go tell your master, Elijah is here.”***

Notice the verbal exchange between Obadiah and Elijah; when Obadiah met Elijah Obadiah called; Elijah ***“my lord”***. (Verse 7)

This was a greeting of respect but Elijah was not fooled by Obadiah’s false loyalty. Elijah counters by saying; ***“Go tell your master”*** (Verse 8)

Obadiah’s true loyalty becomes even clearer in verses 9 – 14 when Obadiah objects to doing what Elijah told him to do.

Remember Jesus word’s in Luke 6:46; ***“why do you call me Lord and do not do what I say”***

Elijah was saying to Obadiah, ***“How can you profess to be a devout believer in God when you are loyal to the one who is doing everything he can to destroy believers.”***

Obadiah declares his faith and his good works to Elijah but Obadiah has been silent about his faith in God and Obadiah has hidden his good works from his real master Ahab.

You see the difference between Obadiah and Elijah is Elijah doesn't just give his testimony when it is convenient Elijah gives his testimony and then Elijah shows his faith in God by the way he lives.

Notice Obadiah's objections and excuses.

“What have I done wrong,” asked Obadiah, “that you are handing your servant over to Ahab to be put to death? As surely as the LORD your God lives, there is not a nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to look for you. And whenever a nation or kingdom claimed you were not there, he made them swear they could not find you. But now you tell me to go to my master and say, ‘Elijah is here.’ I don’t know where the Spirit of the LORD may carry you when I leave you. If I go and tell Ahab and he doesn’t find you, he will kill me. Yet I your servant have worshiped the LORD since my youth”. (1st Kings 18:9 -12)

Basically, Obadiah is saying; *Elijah I do not trust you; you might disappear again. If Ahab thinks I had anything to do with hiding you he will kill me. I do not want to have anything to do with you because that might publicly implicate me as a believer in God.*

Obadiah had every right to be afraid to tell King Ahab Elijah was here because if Elijah went into hiding again Ahab would kill Obadiah.

Remember Queen Jezebel had killed most of The Prophets of God.

Remember Ahab blamed Elijah for the three year drought throughout Israel.

Also Ahab had been searching for Elijah for the past three years to kill him.

Obadiah reluctantly went and told King Ahab that Elijah has returned and that Elijah wants to talk to him after Elijah assures Obadiah that he will not go back into hiding.

It is commendable that Obadiah could remain devoted to God even though he served his evil master King Ahab.

But there is no indication that Obadiah did anything to get Ahab to change his evil ways, or to bring the power of Almighty God to alleviate the drought in Israel.

As believers we are in the world and we must function in the world, but we are not to be of the world.

Listen to the words of our Risen Lord to the church of Thyatira;

“I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first. Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.” (Revelation 2:19 – 23)

As Christians we must never ignore the command in Romans 12:2; ***“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”***

Most people would think Obadiah was a pretty good guy, But Obadiah had a problem.

He was more concerned with his relationship with Ahab than he was with his relationship with God.

Even though Obadiah saw himself as a religious man the fact is he was committed to his own comfort and safety.

Obadiah was sitting on the fence.

He served Ahab and enjoyed living in the palace but he was also religious and gave to God’s work. Obadiah was trying to serve both Ahab and God.

But Jesus said; ***“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.*** (Matthew 6:24)

Obadiah kept silent about his belief in God because he did not want to do anything to offend King Ahab and Queen Jezebel or to jeopardize his comfortable style of living.

Obadiah was different from other people that God put in high position in the court of a foreign pagan king.

Remember Joseph was the prime minister of Egypt and he saved his Hebrew family during a famine in Israel.

Daniel became the Prime Minister of Babylon by acknowledging that it was God Almighty who gave him the power to interpret the king’s dreams.

Daniel was thrown in a den of lions because he prayed and worshipped God in plain view and David refused to bow down to King Nebuchadnezzar’s stature.

Queen Esther saved the Jewish people from annihilation.

Nehemiah was King Artaxerxes cup bearer and he got Artaxerxes to finance the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem.

And we all need to ask ourselves, was my position given to me by God for His glory or is my position just for my own comfort and pleasure.

As Christians we are to be in the world and not of the world.

We are to be salt and light to expose the darkness in the world around us.

We all need to ask ourselves, am I am being conformed to the world or am I allowing The Holy Spirit to transform me and use me.

So what does this account that occurred thousands of years ago in a foreign land have to do with us today?

You see King Ahab, The Prophet Elijah, and Obadiah are representative of all people today.

Some people can identify with King Ahab.

They have no desire for God to be in their life.

They are self-centered and they only care about their comfort and their pleasure.

They do not care about the needs or hurts of the people around them.

Some people identify with Elijah.

They love The Lord and they have dedicated their life to serving The Lord every day.

They tell other people about The Lord and how The Lord is working in their life.

Their acts of forgiveness and kindness are evident in their daily life.

Some people can identify with Obadiah.

They are silent Christians. I.e.; they only practice their faith when they are at home or when they are with other Christians.

They hide the fact that they are Christians when they are with unbelievers.

Their spiritual temperature is determined by the people around them.

They attend church on a regular basis and on Sunday they give their time, their talents, and their money to The Lord.

But on Monday through Saturday they live like the rest of the world.

They only obey The Lord's commandments that fit their life style and they ignore the commandments that they do not like.

They resist The Holy Spirit's efforts to transform their life.

Their co-workers and neighbors never see any evidence that they are a Christian.

Jesus said; ***"If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, The Son of Man will be ashamed of them when He comes in His Fathers' glory with the holy angels."***
(Mark 8:38)

The truth is there is a little Ahab, a little Elijah, and a little Obadiah in all of us.

So the real question for each of us is who do I identify with the most; King Ahab, Elijah, or Obadiah?

God's word to us challenges us not to be like Ahab by refusing to ignore God's word and warnings to us to repent.

God's word to us challenges us not to be a silent Christian like Obadiah.

God's word to us today challenges each of us to become more like Elijah each and every day.

As Christians we are to reflect the love and forgiveness of Jesus to the unsaved people God has put in our life.

Remember Ahab's blood was licked up by dogs.

Obadiah was never heard of again.

But Elijah, was caught up to meet The Lord in the air and Elijah will always be in the presence of The Lord.

God's word to us today challenges each of us to ask ourselves; "*am I dedicated to my personal comfort or am I dedicated to The Lord?*"

"Who am I trusting in myself, my money, my career or in The Lord?"

AMEN