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THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

LESSON VII, THIRD QUARTER, INTERNATIONAL SERIES, AUG. 14.

Text of the Lesson, I Kings xviii, 1-16—Memory Verses, 12-16—Golden Text, I Kings xviii, 12—Commentary Prepared by Rev. D. M. Stearns.

[Copyright, 1904, by American Press Association.] In our study of the life of Elijah we must ever see him as a man of God, standing before God, hearing the voice of God and speaking the word of God. Hearing implies obeying, so we see him doing just what God told him unhesitatingly. A man of God is a God controlled man, wholly in the hand of God, that God may be glorified in him. We left Elijah in our last lesson in the home of the widow of Sarepta, the three inmates of the home witnessing day by day the miracle of the constant increase of the meal and oil according to the word of the Lord.

The incident of the death and resurrection of the widow's son and the widow's testimony, "Now by this I know that thou art a man of God and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth," closed the chapter, showing that the Lord God of Elijah could not only miraculously sustain life, but also give life to the dead. What an honor to be a representative of such a God and to be in constant and conscious touch with Him, as Elijah was!

According to the Spirit's testimony through the Lord Jesus and through James (Luke iv, 25; Jas. v, 17) Elijah spent three and a half years by the brook and in the widow's home, a full year being spent in the latter (I Kings xviii, 15), but now the same word of the Lord that sent him to his hiding places comes to him with the message, "Go, shew thyself unto Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth" (xviii, 1); and obedient Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. When Joseph was told to take Mary and the child Jesus and go down to Egypt, the command was, "Be thou there until I bring thee word," and the same messenger brought him word when it was time for him to leave Egypt. God was managing; Joseph had only to obey (Matt. ii, 13, 20).

Turning from Elijah for a moment, we learn that Ahab had as ruler of his house a God fearing man named Obadiah, who, as his name implies (servant of Jehovah), served the Lord in that ungodly house, reminding us of Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon and suggesting to us that it is possible to serve the Lord under any circumstances in which He may permit us to be placed.

About the time that the Lord sent Elijah to meet Ahab both Ahab and Obadiah started forth, Ahab going one way by himself and Obadiah another way by himself (verse 6), to see if they could find water and grass to save the horses and mules alive. Elijah met Obadiah and said to him, "Go tell thy Lord, Behold, Elijah is here" (verse 8). Obadiah replied that it was as much as his life was worth to do such a thing, inasmuch as Ahab had caused search to be made for Elijah everywhere and had taken an oath of every kingdom and nation that they could not find him (verses 9-14). Although Obadiah feared the Lord and was brave enough to risk the vengeance of Jezebel when he saved alive a hundred of the Lord's prophets by hiding them in caves at the time that she attempted to kill them all, yet he feared death, for note his threefold, "He will slay me" (verses 8, 12, 14). But this is not strange, for Abraham asked Sarah to lie, and he himself was not truthful concerning their relationship, for fear that he might be slain.

They had not revealed to them in those days that which we have revealed to us concerning the gain that death is to the believer (Phil. i, 21, 23; II Cor. v, 8), nor was it quite the same to the believer to die before Jesus Christ died and rose again that it has been since. The captives whom He set free, according to Eph. iv, 8, may have been the redeemed of the Old Testament days, who until the resurrection and ascension of Christ had not the happiness which then became theirs. There are still many believers who are all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death, but there is no need of it, for He is able to deliver from all such fears.

Elijah's reply to Obadiah's fears was, "As the Lord of hosts liveth before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him this day" (verse 15). Compare xvii, 1, and let us take as one of our watchwords, "The Lord liveth before whom I stand." Note in connection with it Gabriel's testimony in Luke i, 19, and our Lord's own words in John vi, 57, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."

Obadiah, being encouraged and assured, went and told Ahab, and Ahab went to meet Elijah, and when they met Elijah fearlessly told Ahab that he, not Elijah, was the cause of all this trouble upon Israel, and he commanded him to summon the prophets of Baal to Carmel, with all Israel, that the God of Israel might publicly give a token that He only is the living and true God. Our next lesson will fully describe this. There is great need today of Elijahs who will promptly and fully obey God and either hide themselves or fearlessly meet the blaspheming Ahab as the Lord may say, or do both at once, for it is only as self is hidden, reckoned dead, that God can manifest Himself to the ungodly Ahab who would fain rule Him and His Christ off the earth, and out of His book and, as men say, run things themselves, exalting self above every god and recognizing no god but the intellect of man and no will but their own. Yet the Lord liveth (Ps. xviii,

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