

1 KINGS 18:1-4 “SHOW GODLINESS IN EVIL WORKPLACES”

In a study 94% of respondents said they had worked with or were currently working with a toxic person:

- **Signs of toxic workplace are: widespread anger, frustration, discontent... dysfunctional processes... dysfunctional relationships... dysfunctional meetings... obvious hypocrisy in the company... overly restrictive systems for controlling people...**¹

“Many workplace environments are very much like swimming with sharks... there are people in the workplace that are often described with the terms: difficult, narcissistic, workplace bullies, passive-aggressive personalities... these behavioral types are common in many workplace environments... and in order to thrive and even survive in these workplaces, a person must recognize the behavioral characteristic of these toxic personalities and learn how to deal with them... also, you must be attentive to the possibility that the toxic behaviors may only be a symptom of a much more serious dysfunctional organization... Toxic is a fairly recent term used to describe these behaviors, which often have effects that are more far-reaching than just an occasional bad day at the office...”²

- According to **Dr. Mitchell Kusy**; toxic personalities are people who demonstrate a pattern of counter-productive work behaviors, which is debilitating not only to the individual worker themselves, but also to the other workers, managers, work teams, organizations... these behaviors include: **negative attitudes, rudeness, manipulation, blaming, criticizing, inability to see other perspectives, sense of entitlement...**
- Within the work environment, toxic behaviors make it difficult to build teamwork and are often a cause for losing good workers.

Obadiah – introduced to us here

- A Godly man engaged in the service of a very un-godly boss - Ahab
- Ahab’s second in control
 - The Boss’s wife – completely out of control – she was ruining the nation, and perverting her husband
 - She killed every Godly man she could get her hands on.
- Obadiah knew:

¹ <http://bizshifts-trends.com/2014/07/31/toxic-personalities-workplace-bad-even-evil-business-behavior-bullies-narcissistic-machiavellian-psychos/>

² <http://bizshifts-trends.com/2014/07/31/toxic-personalities-workplace-bad-even-evil-business-behavior-bullies-narcissistic-machiavellian-psychos/>

- God was judging Samaria and Northern Israel for not following God's law
- God had stopped the rain for the past 3 ½ years because of his boss
- God had sent a prophet - Elijah

3 ½ years of a severe drought and Ahab would not change his ways – even though he knew it was God's judgment against his pagan ways

- Samaria and all of Israel was in a horrible famine because of drought
- No grain or grass even for their livestock
- People were dying, livestock were dying, disease was rampant – but no change of heart.
- **Can Ahab's heart become so decrepit against the Lord that he would allow others in his family to become sick and die because of sin, and still not repent?**

1 And it came to pass after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth."

- 1 year by the brook being fed by Ravens
- 2 years with the Widow and her son (1 Kings 17)
 - This form of expression, both in Hebrew and Latin, means 'after the third year,' *i.e.* some time between the third and fourth year. ³

Who was this man that could call drought upon the earth?

- Just a regular guy – but he prayed fervent prayers from a righteous heart and believed that would avail much in Heaven.

James 5:16–18

16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

17 **Elijah was a man with a nature like ours,** and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for **three years and six months**.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

Listen California:

It is the Lord alone who causes the rain to come:

Jeremiah 10:13 When He utters His voice, There is a multitude of waters in the heavens: "And He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning for the rain, He brings the wind out of His treasures."

Jeremiah 14:22

Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain? (Baal?)

Or can the heavens (alone) give showers?

Are You not He, O LORD our God?

³ B. Blayney, Thomas Scott, and R.A. Torrey with John Canne, Browne, *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, vol. 1 (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, n.d.), 248.

Therefore we will wait for You,
Since You have made all these.

2 So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and there was a severe famine in Samaria.

- For 3 ½ years Ahab has sought to find and kill Elijah
 - God protected Elijah from the devices of the Devil
- How often had Elijah hoped that this day would come?
 - Is God is lifting His hand of judgment upon Ahab and Jezebel?
 - Rain would soon return
 - The collateral damage of the King's sin would soon be relieved.
- BUT – there was a deeper drought in Israel.
 - Drought of the Word of God
 - Drought of the Prophets of God
 - Drought of the Teachers and Priests of God.
 - No Pastoral guts to stand up to the pagan liberal agenda.

3 And Ahab had called Obadiah, who was in charge of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly.)

- **Obadiah was also a devout believer in the LORD** (but not the writer of the Bible book of that name).⁴
 - Obadiah surely knows why there is a severe drought
 - Yet – no record of ever calling his master to righteousness
 - **Nehemiah**: cupbearer to the King of Persia, a very pagan King
 - Serves him with honor and care
 - Loves him enough to take the poison before the King
 - Bears the benefit of his careful care of an unbeliever

Nehemiah 2:1–6

1 And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before.

2 Therefore the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart.” So I became dreadfully afraid,

3 and said to the king, “May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers’ tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire?”

4 Then the king said to me, “What do you request?” So I prayed to the God of heaven.

5 And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.”

⁴ Thomas L. Constable, “1 Kings,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 525.

6 Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), “How long will your journey be? And when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

- **Why does God sometimes place faithful Christians in ungodly businesses?**
 - Perhaps to change the course of a Nation

4 For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.)

Obadiah:

- He feared the Lord greatly.
 - He understood his time, his place, his calling
 - Never compromising
 - A faithful worker who stuck to obeying God first
 - A faithful worker who never chose to be Ahab’s conscience or Holy Spirit
 - A faithful worker who let God do His part with Ahab and Jezebel
- 1 Kings 19:18** Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

- **Courson:** *“You might not be powerful like Elijah. But you can be profitable like Obadiah. When asked the secret of his spiritual strength, Spurgeon said, “I have a people who pray for me.” You might not be able to preach, but you can pray for those who do. You might not be able to cross the seas as a missionary, but you can pray for those who do. You might not be able to go door to door, witnessing, **but you can pray.** I believe that those who are Obadiahs—faithfully working behind the scenes—are not only profitable now, but will be greatly rewarded in heaven.”*⁵

John 17:15–19

15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

⁵ Jon Courson, *Jon Courson’s Application Commentary: Volume One: Genesis–Job* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 1009.