

MEMORY VERSE: “Jehoshaphat stood and said, ‘Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.’” 2 Chronicles 20:20, NKJV

LESSON STUDY INTRO

This week we explore some of the attributes and qualities of prophets as recorded in the Old Testament.

1. Prophets are people (Sun, Wed, Fri)

- Prophets share the same fallen humanity common to us all.
 - Elijah is described as “a man with a nature like ours” (James 5:17). Human fear and discouragement were evident in his retreat from the threats of Jezebel. (see 1 Kings 19:1-18)
 - Other Old Testament prophets demonstrate similar shortcomings: the greed of Balaam, the jealousy of Miriam, and the selfishness of Jonah, etc.
 - The prophetic gift does not automatically override such weaknesses, thus demonstrating how “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” (1 Cor. 14:32)
- God also calls women to be prophets.
 - The OT records several women with the gift of prophecy.
 - Miriam (Ex. 15:20)
 - Deborah (Judges 4:4)
 - Huldah (2 Kings 22:14)
 - Noadiah (Nehemiah 6:14)
 - Ellen G. White’s ministry is a last-day manifestation of the same prophetic gift among God’s people (see Friday’s lesson).
 - The rebuke of Miriam confirms that these women, like their male counterparts, were also beset with a sinful nature.

2. A prophet’s work is rarely pleasant (Mon, Tue)

- Prophets anointed priests and kings.
 - Anointing Priests (Lev. 8:10-13); Anointing Kings (1 Sam. 8).

- Interestingly, when Israel demanded a king, God did not replace the prophet with a king but established a separate royal role. Thus, even in the theocracy of ancient Israel, there was a distinction between religious and civil authority.
- Prophets were often called to “speak truth to power.”
 - “As recipients of God’s revelation and inspiration, true prophets faithfully, accurately, and honestly transmitted God’s messages, even if, at times, this made them unpopular with the people in power.” Q’tly, Mon, par 1
 - Nathan to David (2 Sam 12:1-7)
 - Elijah to Ahab (1 Kings 18:17-19)
 - Huldah and Josiah (2 Kings 22)
 - Amos and Jeroboam (Amos 7:7-17)

3. Satan has prophets, too (Mon, Thu)

- False prophets speak not what God commands them but what they—no doubt inspired by Satan—are inclined to speak (Jer. 23:25, 26; Eze. 13:1, 2).
 - “False prophets often follow popular views.” Q’tly, Thu, par 4
 - People often prefer the message of a false prophet.
 - Just because a message sounds good or feels pleasing doesn’t mean it’s true. The heart is “deceitful above all things.” (Jer. 17:9; 1 Ki. 22:1-18; Lk. 6:26).
- Scripture repeatedly warns us about the comfort of false messages instead of the sometimes-painful rebuke of truth (Is. 30:8-10; Jer. 14:10-16; Mt. 24:4, 5; 2 Tim. 4:1-5).

CONCLUSION

Would that every minister might realize the sacredness of his office and the holiness of his work, and show the courage that Elijah showed! As divinely appointed messengers, ministers are in a position of awful responsibility... They are not to speak their own words, but words which One greater than the potentates of earth has bidden them speak. Their message is to be, ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ God calls for men like Elijah, Nathan, and John the Baptist—men who will bear His message with faithfulness, regardless of the consequences; men who will speak the truth bravely, though it call for the sacrifice of all they have. PK 142.1