SSP- **THE GIFT OF PROPHECY**

James Rafferty 2026 Q4 L3 The Humanity of Prophets

Lesson 3

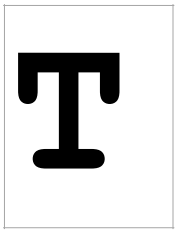
**October 10-16*

Old Testament Prophets

Sabbath Afternoon

Read for This Week's Study: *James 5:17, 18; 1 Kings 19:1-16; 1 Kings 22:1-14; Exod. 15:20; 2 Kings 22:11-14; Jer. 14:1-15.*

Memory Text: "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).*



The Global Positioning System (GPS) helps travelers know where they are, where they are going, and even provides warnings against hazards. Spiritual travelers journeying to heaven also need guidance now and in the future from a heavenly GPS THAT IS [GODS] “positioning system.” One way that God did this in times past was through the ministry of Old Testament prophets. In their narratives, counsels, prophecies, poetry, and songs, we discover a lot about the dozens of prophets who presented God’s messages to the people.

This week’s lesson explores Old Testament descriptions of prophets, descriptions that help us understand the gift of prophecy as it had

been manifested by some of these servants of God.

As we will see, these were people like us, in that they were frail human beings subject to fear, anger, and discouragement. Life for them was not easy, but filled with challenges and hardships, as it is for all of us.

What, then, can we learn from looking at a few of these specially called servants of God?

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, October 17.*

Sunday

October 11

The Humanity of Prophets

As we saw last week, the Lord used Elijah the prophet to do a tremendous work in Israel,

despite fervent opposition. What the Lord had accomplished through him was incredible. And yet . . . what?

Reflect on how James presents Elijah the prophet, in James 5:17, 18. What might he mean by saying that Elijah had "a nature like ours" *(NKJV)*?

Elias was a man subject to like passions [SIMILARLY AFFECTED] as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

PRAYED 1 TIME FOR NO RAIN AND PRAYED 7 TIMES FOR RAIN

Elijah had a stunning success on Mount Carmel *(1 Kings 18)*; God had worked in a mighty way through him, and one of the most astonishing miracles depicted in Old Testament history occurred: at the sound of Elijah's own words, fire literally came down from heaven *(1 Kings 18:38)!* You would have thought that this man of God would have been exceedingly happy after something like that.

DESPITE THIS MANIFESTATION OF GODS POWER THROUGH ELIJAH, THE PROPHET RUNS FROM HIS POST OF DUTY AT THE THREATS OF JEZEBEL.

Read 1 Kings 19:1-16. What does this tell us about the emotional state of God's prophet?

" 'It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!' " *(1 Kings*

19:4, NKJV). This sounds like a man suffering from some form of depression. Why? What happened on Mount Carmel would not be an easy act to follow, for sure; but, still, something else is going on here.

FEAR AND DEPRESSION IS FINDS ENTRANCE WHEN WE LOSE SIGHT OF JESUS. ELIJAH HAS ALLOWED THE APOSTASY OF THE CHURCH LEADERS TO REDIRECT GODS CALLING AND DIRECTION IN HIS LIFE. THIS IS A SERIOUS MISTAKE BUT IF HE IS WILLING TO BE REDIRECTED BY GOD RATHER THAN BEING DIRECTED BY APOSTASY, GOD CAN STILL ACCOMPLISH HIS DIVINE PURPOSE THROUGH ELIJAH.

WHEN ELIJAH REACHES HIS FINAL DESTINATION IN A CAVE SOME 40 PLUS DAYS FROM THE PLACE GOD HAD SENT HIM, GOD ASKS ELIJAH WHY HE DESERTED HIS HEAVENLY ORDAINED POST OF DUTY.

ELIJAH THEN DOES SOMETHING THAT IS COMMON TO ALL HUMANITY. IT BEGAN AT OUR FALL IN EDEN WHEN GOD CONFRONTED ADAM WITH HIS SIN.

WHAT DID ADAM DO?

WHEN GOD THEN CONFRONTED EVE, WHAT DID SHE DO?

AND WE HAVE BEEN DOING THAT EVER SINCE.

IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S QUESTION, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, ELIJAH POINTS OUT THE APOSTASY AND FAILURES OF THE CHURCH.

THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOK OF ROMANS PICKS UP THIS SAME STORYLINE, ADDING SOME KEY INSIGHTS TO THE UNDERLYING PROBLEM THAT ELIJAH, AND EACH ONE OF US IS DEALING WITH: ROMANS 11:1-4

REPLACE WITH KJV

"I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against

Israel? “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.” But what is God’s reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”(ESV)

SO ELIJAH IS TAKING SOME MUCH NEEDED CAVE TIME. WHEN PEOPLE WHOM GOD HAS USED MIGHTILY MAKE THE KIND OF MISTAKES ELIJAH JUST MADE, SOME DOWN TIME IS IN ORDER:

There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, **“What are you doing here, Elijah?”** He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to

take it away.” And he said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a (“STILL SMALL VOICE” KJV) low whisper. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, **“What are you doing here, Elijah?”** He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” And the LORD said to him, “Go, return

on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place.

[Perhaps the key could be found in his words, " 'I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life' " *(1 Kings 19:10, NKJV)*. This sounds as if he's lamenting what he believes to be his failures in ministry. Apostasy remains, despite his best efforts, as if he alone could have stemmed the tide. Whatever ultimately is going on here, we can see the humanity and fragility of this man of God. In other words, Elijah was a man who had "a nature like ours."]

Why might it be easy at times to have a sense of "failure" in your own life or endeavors? What Bible promises can you claim to help you work through discouragement?

WHEN WE LOOK AT PEOPLE - THEIR RESPONSE - THE IMPACT OF OUR EFFORTS - WHEN WE ULTIMATELY LOOK AT OURSELVES INSTEAD OF LOOKNG TO GOD AND WE WILL BE DISCOURAGED. SO MUCH SO THAT IN TAKING OUR EYES OFF JESUS AND PLACING THEM ON PEOPLE AND THEIR APOSTASY WE MAY EVEN FAIL TO STAND IN THE POSITION THAT GOD HAS APPOINTED US EXCUSING OUR FAILURE BY POINTING OUT THE FAILURE OF OTHERS. LOOKING AT OTHERS MAY LEAD US TO LEAVE GOD'S APPOINTED PLACE OF DUTY. IF WE THEN JUSTIFY OURSELVES WE TOO MAY JUST BE REPLACED. WE ARE REPLACEABLE. ELIJAH WAS REPLACEABLE. GOD SENT ELIJAH TO ANOINT THREE PEOPLE TO ACCOMPLISH

GODS WILL AND ONE OF THEM, ELISHA, WAS TO

REPLACE ELIJAH.

SOP STATEMENT ON ELISHA:

“IN EVERY AGE THE CALL OF THE HOUR IS ANSWERED BY THE COMING OF THE MAN. THE LORD IS GRACIOUS. HE UNDERSTANDS THE SITUATION. HIS WILL TODAY IS THAT FOR THE PRESENT TIME THE LAMB-LIKE KINDNESS OF ELISHA SHALL EXCEED THE SEVERITY OF ELIJAH.
“[THE MAN THAT CAN BUILD UP AND CREATE A FRAGRANT, GRATEFUL ATMOSPHERE, IS NOT YET PRESENTED BY GOD. WHETHER THE PRESENT WORK BE TO BREAK DOWN OR TO BUILD UP, TO REINSTATE THE OLD OR TO GIVE PLACE TO THE NEW, TO ENFORCE THE DEMANDS OF EQUITY AND JUDGMENT, OR TO ENCOURAGE HOPE AND COURAGE AND FAITH, THE LORD KNOWS WHAT IS NEEDED. HE IS LOOKING ON. HE, THE GREAT MASTER-WORKER, IS SURE TO HAVE THE VERY MAN FOR THE PLACE READY TO DO THE WORK WHEN THOSE CONNECTED WITH THE WORK ARE READY FOR THE CHANGE.
“LET THE FAITH THAT WORKS BY LOVE AND PURIFIES THE SOUL BE CHERISHED. HASTY MOVES WILL NOT HELP THE SITUATION, BUT WILL BRING IN A HOST OF DIFFICULTIES THAT WILL NOT BE FOR THE GLORY OF GOD…
“THE WORD OF GOD IS TO BE TAUGHT. THE LIFE OF THE MAN UPON WHOM IS LAID THE WORK OF TEACHING THE WORD OF THE LORD IS TO BE AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE POWER AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE PRINCIPLES THAT HE OFFERS TO OTHERS. HE WHO MASTERS THE ART OF EDUCATING OTHERS WILL HIMSELF PROVE A SUCCESS BY SUCCEEDING].
“HE WHO WEARS THE MANTLE, NOT OF ELIJAH, BUT OF CHRIST, WILL GIVE EVIDENCE THAT HE KEEPS HIS EYE FIXED ON THE SAVIOUR. IMBUED WITH CHRIST’S SPIRIT, HE IS FITTED TO TEACH. HE IS CONSTANTLY UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE HIGH AND HOLY IMPRESSIONS MADE BY GOD.
“ELISHA RECEIVED A DOUBLE PORTION OF THE SPIRIT THAT HAD RESTED ON ELIJAH. IN HIM THE POWER OF ELIJAH’S SPIRIT WAS UNITED WITH THE GENTLENESS, MERCY, AND THE TENDER COMPASSION OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.”. 17LTMS, LT 93, 1902, PAR. 4-17LTMS, LT 93, 1902, PAR. 10

NEW TESTAMENT PROPHETS - NEXT WEEK 4th