

Sabbath School Lesson #3 – Old Testament Prophets – 10-16 October 2026

Christ would have us believe His prophets and be established. When Jehoshaphat had received from the prophet of the Lord a message for the people, he said: “And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper” (2 Chronicles 20:20). The establishing power of prophetic words is shown by the apostle Peter when, after relating the view which he had of “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” on the mount of transfiguration, he said: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:19).

Sunday: The Humanity of Prophets – 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”? The difference between Elijah and us is not in nature or in the amount that he had from God, but in the amount that he appropriated by faith. Elijah believed God’s word and asked no further evidence. The trouble is not in God’s not giving, but in our not taking. But that which made Elijah what he was, is indicated in the words of his message to King Ahab. “And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab: As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word” (1 Kings 17:1). “Before whom I stand” – these are words that distinguished Elijah from the mass of his fellowmen. Elijah stood before the Lord, and therefore whatever he did was done before the Lord, and as in His presence. It was true of other men, and is true of men to-day, that they stand before God; but Elijah recognised and realised the fact, while others did not, and his course differed from others accordingly. That difference could not be slight; for would not our own course of life be vastly different if we were visibly standing and acting before the Lord? We are told: “What was it that constituted the power of Elijah? “As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand” [2 Kings 5:16] – this was ever the watchword on his lips; and in these words lay his power. His message was from God; it filled his whole being” {22LtMs, Ms 117, 1907, par. 20}. Elijah’s watchword must be ours. We are told: “Parents should remember that they are living, speaking, and acting in the presence of God” {RH March 13, 1894, par. 3}. “When the leaders in the church, ministers and people, fathers and mothers, have not had elevated views of this matter, what could be expected of the inexperienced children? They are too often found in groups, away from the parents, who should have charge of them. Notwithstanding they are in the presence of God, and His eye is looking upon them; they are light and trifling; they whisper and laugh, are careless, irreverent, and inattentive” {5T 496.2}. Imagine the effect upon ourselves of coming into the actual presence of God, as concerns our thoughts, motives and actions. Every other presence would shrink into nothingness. Our whole interest and anxiety would be concentrated upon the single thought of the will of God, and the relation of our lives to it.

Monday: Identifying True Prophets – Read 1 Kings 22:1-14; what does it tell us about how faithful prophets operate? The contrast between true and false prophets stands out sharply in the experience of Ahab and Jehoshaphat, kings of Israel and Judah, with Micaiah the prophet (read 1 Kings 22). One of the most enlightening episodes in this account is that in which King Ahab’s messenger tried to tell prophet Micaiah what he should say, to be in harmony with what other four hundred false prophets had said, when he came before the two monarchs. But the prophet of God was not interested in what the other prophets had said. His attention was focused on what the Lord had to say. His revealing reply was, “As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak.” No true prophet could have taken any other attitude. But no one test is a full and sufficient identification of a prophet. It is frequently easier to detect the false prophet than it is to be certain of the true, for if he obviously violates one of the major tests, we have no difficulty in knowing the source of his messages. On the other hand, before it can be finally determined that one is a true prophet, all the tests must be painstakingly applied and sufficient time permitted to make thorough investigation. The words of the Master clearly point out that one of the spiritual problems of

those who live in the days preceding His second advent is that of dealing with false christs and false prophets (Matthew 24). These imposters will have little success among those who have been fortified with the truth and who know how to apply the tests. Adventists should be so familiar with these criteria that they will automatically apply them in every instance where they are needed without having to ask, 'How can I tell whether this prophet is true or false?'

Tuesday: Functions of Prophets – Read 1 Samuel 8:4-22 and Leviticus 8:10-13; what are the functions of prophets? But let us apply the matter to our recent history as Adventists, ponder upon the function and role of Ellen White. The role of prophets has never been easy. The Master emphasised this one day as He talked with His disciples and the "multitude," which included many of the religious leaders of the nation. After reviewing the past, He looked into the future and declared that persecution, and even death, awaited heaven's messengers (Matthew 23:29-35). Ellen White, like the ancient prophets, faced trials and discouraging circumstances as she tried to accomplish her special mission. If she had not had to deliver messages of correction, reproof, or rebuke; if the testimony she was called upon to bear had been all of praise and approbation; if she had been able to lean heavily upon human beings to guide her in fulfilling her call, she would not have experienced the periods of loneliness. But earthly instructors or counsellors could give only limited guidance to her in her special work. To be true to her mission, much of the time she had to go directly to God for help. In 1902 she wrote, "I have been alone in this matter, severely alone, with all the difficulties and all the trials connected with the work. God alone could help me. The last work that is to be done by me in this world will soon be finished. I must express myself plainly in a manner, if possible, not to be misunderstood" {17LtMs, Ms 227, 1902, par. 6}.

Wednesday: Women Prophets – Let us address the elephant in the room; whilst women prophets are ordained of God, are they to be leaders (priests or pastors or elders) in the church? Miriam, a prophetess, Moses' sister, coveted his leadership role. Moses' wife, Zipporah, had spoken to her father Jethro that Moses' leadership "burdens were wearing away his strength" {PP 384.1}, Jethro advised him: "Moses chose able men" (Ex 18:25); with Moses and able men leading, Miriam coveted leading, she charged: "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it"; and "the LORD ... departed" and "Miriam became leprous" (Numbers 12:2, 9-10). "This manifestation of the Lord's displeasure was designed to be a warning to all Israel, to check the growing spirit of discontent and insubordination" {PP 385.1}. Ellen White specifically rejected the idea of women leadership position in the church. She said: "It is not right for you to suppose that I am striving to be first, striving for leadership ... I want it to be understood that I have no ambition to have the name of leader, or any other name that may be given me, except that of a messenger of God; I claim no other name or position" {5MR 439.1}. She also said: "I am not to appear before the people as holding any other position than that of a messenger with a message" {8T 237.4}.

Thursday: False Prophets – Read Matthew 7:15-16; how are we to act towards these false prophets? – "Beware of false prophets," Christ says. Why? – Because if we heed them, we shall certainly be led astray. What is the work of a prophet? – it is to teach, to instruct, in truth. The work of a false prophet, therefore, is to teach false doctrines; and we are commanded to cease to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge (Proverbs 19:27). But how are we to know the false teachers from the true? – the text last referred to gives us the clue. "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge" (Proverbs 14:7). We are to prove the teachers by their teaching. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). "He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God" (John 3:34). "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).