

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*

Lesson 2 “The Call of a Prophet”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 15:6; Galatians 3:6-9; 1 Kings 18:19-39; Isaiah 53; Daniel 2:46-48; Mark 1:2-5; Matthew 11:1-6.

Memory Text

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me’” (Isaiah 6:8, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Abraham, Defender of the Covenant
- III. The Elijah Message
- IV. Isaiah, the Gospel Prophet
- V. Daniel, the Faithful Seer
- VI. John the Baptist, Preparing a People
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

- 1. Being a prophet is a difficult calling, so God’s call to someone to be a prophet is not always received with open arms. The prophetic voice is often rejected or simply ignored. (Sabbath Afternoon)
- 2. Why do you think there seem to be no prophets at the present time? (Sabbath Afternoon)
- 3. For what purpose did God call Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 17:1-8, cf. Gen 1:26-27)? Why do you think the call of Abraham is mentioned in a lesson on the call of a prophet (Gen 20:7)? Read Genesis 15:6, Galatians 3:6-9, and Hebrew 11:8. What about Abraham’s life and character qualified him for God’s service in spite of his flaws? (Sunday)

4. Read 1 Kings 18:19-39. What can we see from this story about how the prophetic office works? How is this story retold in the Book of Revelation (Rev 16:16, cf. Rev 13:13-14)? Why does God allow such an anti-demonstration of His power and character? (Monday)
5. Read Isaiah 6:1-8. What can we learn about how God calls people to be prophets from the call of Isaiah? (Tuesday)
6. Isaiah was not only called to speak to the people of his time. He also received a vision of the suffering of Christ and its meaning that was unparalleled in the Old Testament. Read Isaiah 53:1-12. What does this teach us about the prophetic gift? (Tuesday)
7. What makes the Book of Daniel special is that you have a prophet of God speaking directly to leaders of the pagan world. God even treated a pagan king as if he were a prophet among God's own people (Dan 2:28; 4:13; 7:1). (Wednesday)
8. What kind of results did Daniel's witness to pagan rulers have? Read Daniel 2:46-48, 4:18, 34-37, 5:13-14, and 6:25-27. What does this tell you about how God works in prophecy? (Wednesday)
9. What do we know for sure about the future on the basis of prophecy? (Wednesday)
10. Read Mark 1:2-5. What was the purpose of John the Baptist's ministry? (Thursday)
11. God calls prophets at particular times for specific purposes. Ellen White was called with a unique message for the last period of earth's history. The Adventist pioneers loved the pilot analogy for her ministry. The Bible served the Christian era like a map of the ocean. But that map instructed the ship's captain that when they approached the harbor, a small ship would come out to bring a pilot on board who would guide the bigger ship through the narrow channels leading to the dock. The Bible covered the whole journey through history, but alerted its readers that specific prophetic help would come only at the end of the journey (Ellen White). What was the unique mission for which God called Ellen White? (Friday)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The people thought, "If we offer these sacrifices, it will somehow appease the anger of God, and He'll be pleased." And that's been even carried down to the sacrifice of Christ, that if we point God to the fact that Jesus died in our stead, maybe His anger will be appeased. That's the heathen view. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. These sacrifices were not to appease God. They were to say something to us that might lead us to be contrite, to be humble, to realize how serious sin is, and to say, "God, I really need not just to be forgiven, I need to be completely changed. A new heart and a right spirit, and all those things." If the

sacrifice of Jesus doesn't lead us to that understanding, it does no good. And David was beginning to understand that. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – 2 Samuel, recorded November 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/15MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/16MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Graham: Ah. He died in our stead. He died as the substitution. In a way, it's very true. I mean, either He dies or we die. However, that's where the comparison ends, because if God has let you and me and all other sinners die, all it would have done is prove the truthfulness of His warning, "If you sin, you will die." And God could say to the universe, "Was I right? I said sinners would die, and look, they're dead." But the universe would not have had answers to questions two and three that I just mentioned. When Jesus died, there was no doubt in the minds of the universe that God was not killing His Son. They were clear about that. And the death of Christ answers all those three questions. So it's not either us or Him. His death was infinitely more significant than ours. But had He not died, then what else could God do but leave us to reap the consequences and we all would have died. So in a sense, yes. He died in our stead, but beyond that there's no comparison.

Lou: But not as a payoff. It's not one or the other.

Graham: It's not His death is equal to all of ours. His death is infinitely more significant than the death of every sinful man or angel who has ever lived. The death of angels and men would not have answered the questions.

Lou: What you're saying then, is that just a simple "satisfaction" idea doesn't encompass what's involved at all, does it?

Graham: Oh, it makes it much too small. I think it puts God in a very bad light, and it doesn't answer the questions of the Great Controversy. Many folk who prefer those understandings of the plan of salvation do not understand there has been a universe-wide great controversy over the character and government of God. And do you remember at our first meeting, I brought along the evidence that even Luther, hero of the Christian world that he is, could not conceive of these larger issues because he couldn't include the book of Revelation—let alone Hebrews, James and Jude. And this has been the pattern through the years. Not many have seen the sixty-sixth book picture of a universe-wide controversy over the character and government of God. And so they have seen the death of Christ as primarily a plan just to save you and me, for which we are very grateful. It's just that the larger view makes the cross much more significant.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8 with Lou Venden, "The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence" recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG>

Obviously Jesus did not die to win his Father. And how clear Paul is on this. Look quickly at the remaining verses. Second Corinthians 5:19: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. . . ." (RSV) Nowhere ever does the Bible suggest that God had to be reconciled to us. Never once! But God paid the price to reconcile us to Himself! Nor did Jesus die to pay some mere legal penalty. He died to reveal the truth about God and the falsity of Satan's charges. And even the angels had to learn this. Look at Colossians 1:20: ". . . and through him to reconcile to himself ***all things, whether on earth or in heaven***, [emphasis supplied] making peace [not war, but, making peace] by the blood of his cross." (RSV)

As Jesus said in the next verse, John 12:32: "When I am lifted up from the earth I will draw everyone to me." (GNT). Not all men, everyone in the whole family of the universe. You see, viewed in the larger setting of the Great Controversy. The way in which Jesus suffered and died is the greatest revelation of the truth about God and His government that the universe will ever see or ever need. Correctly understood, the message of the cross is final defeat for the adversary. No wonder Satan has worked so hard to obscure and misrepresent and even pervert the meaning of the cross.

But to some of us, the cross is great good news. Yes, it is true that sinners will die, but we have no need to be afraid of God; and He died to prove it. And this message has great power to win to repentance and to trust. Paul was so proud of this good news. Look at his understanding of it in the last verses. 1 Corinthians 1:17, 18:

For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel [what is the gospel, the good news, about?], and not with eloquent wisdom lest the cross of Christ [that's the gospel] be emptied of its power [his good news has great power]. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (RSV)

Now compare with that Romans 1:16, that very famous righteousness by faith verse:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel [this good news]: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith . . . [wherein lies the power?] for in it [something is revealed] the righteousness of God is revealed. (RSV)

The good news is that God is not the unrighteous kind of person His enemies have made Him out to be. And it's so wonderful to see all through the Bible that even before the cross God had good friends who trusted Him always to do the right thing, the merciful thing, and they were proud to know Him and proud to speak about Him to others. Look at Jeremiah 9:24:

Let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight, declares the Lord. (NIV)

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8, "The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence" recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG>

The purpose of the plan of salvation is to restore that trust, to bring the rebellion to an end, and thus to establish at-one-ment once again in the whole universe. All of God's children are unavoidably involved.

Some seem to find it disappointing, even offensive, to learn that Christ did not die primarily for them. But unless God wins this war and reestablishes peace in his family, our salvation is meaningless. Who would want to live for eternity in a warring universe?

Without this larger understanding of a conflict that has involved the universe, it's hard to understand Paul's explanation that Jesus shed his blood to bring peace, reconciliation, and unity to God's children in heaven as well as on earth. But recognition of the war and its issues helps one to take a larger view of the cross and of the plan of salvation and atonement.

The kind of unity God desires cannot be commanded or produced by force or fear. In the course of human history, many tyrants have tried to maintain unity by terror and brutality. But that kind of at-one-ment does not last. Look at what has happened in a number of countries just in recent years.

The kind of at-one-ment God desires is described in the New Testament as a unity that is "inherent in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God." (Ephesians 4:13, REB) People who love and trust the same Jesus and the same God are naturally attracted to each other. The same truth about God that sets them free from tyranny and fear binds them together in the firmest kind of unity. Friends of a friendly God enjoy at-one-ment with each other.

This is where the meaning of the cross is so important. There can be no friendship and at-one-ment where there is fear. Calvary says there is no need to be afraid of God. When God says, "Be my friend," he's not saying, "Be my friend or I'll punish you severely; I'll even put you to death." You don't talk that way to friends—especially if you want to keep their friendship. And

friendship is the whole purpose and meaning of atonement. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends? Another Look at God*, 164-165. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<https://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/servants-or-friends/servants-or-friends-chapter-12>

But an illustration of God's preferred way of persuading us—not with denials, not with claims, but with evidence—is provided by the story of John the Baptist. You remember how John really risked his life to present his cousin Jesus to the people. And how gracious he had been: "He must increase, but I must decrease." Now John was in prison. He heard that Jesus was preaching that you really ought to visit people in prison; but He never came to see His cousin. And eventually John sent emissaries to Christ. "Are you really the one or not? Should we be looking for another?" That is a sad inquiry. Did Jesus say, "I am indeed the One and I expect you to believe it!" It could have been the Devil masquerading as Christ. Instead, He invited the two to spend the day with Him. When the day was over the two men went back to prison to see John.

"Did He answer my question?"

"No!"

"But what did you see? What did you hear?"

And in the text it's recorded "Jesus gave them this reply. 'Go and tell John.'" Matthew 11:46:

Go and tell John what you hear and what you see—that blind men are recovering their sight, cripples are walking, lepers being healed, the deaf hearing, the dead being raised to life and the good news is being given to those in need. And happy is the man who never loses his faith in me. (*Phillips*)

And when the men arrived back at the prison and told this to John; John who knew Isaiah 35 and Isaiah 61 that I've noted there, said, "He is the One." You see, not a claim but evidence. This is God's way and the only dependable way. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #6, "Evaluating the Evidence" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/6MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. {DA 311.2}

The leaven hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God. {COL 98.3}

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. {COL 311.4}

God regards us as His children. He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the royal family, sons and daughters of the heavenly King. He invites us to trust in Him with a trust deeper and stronger than that of a child in his earthly father. Parents love their children, but the love of God is larger, broader, deeper, than human love can possibly be. It is immeasurable. Then if earthly parents know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more shall our Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? {COL 142.1}

Press close to Jesus, and place your hand in His, and He will firmly hold your hand, and never let go of the soul who maintains his faith in Him. . . . {UL 42.3}

By prayer, by the study of His word, by faith in His abiding presence, the weakest of human beings may live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold them by a hand that will never let go. {MH 182.1}

We are to live only one day at a time. We do not have to do the work of a lifetime in a few hours. We need not look into the future with anxiety; for God has made it possible for us to be overcomers every day. {FLB 249.4}

God always rewards the confidence of His people. The way to the throne of mercy is always open. God sees the wants of His people as clearly in the darkness of midnight which surrounds

them as in the splendor of noonday. To look to God for help at all times, this is our safety. {TDG 199.2}

God does not desire the destruction of any. “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?” Ezekiel 33:11. Throughout the period of probationary time His Spirit is entreating men to accept the gift of life. It is only those who reject His pleading that will be left to perish. God has declared that sin must be destroyed as an evil ruinous to the universe. Those who cling to sin will perish in its destruction. {COL 123.3}

Christ was a faithful reprovener. Never lived there another who so hated evil; never another whose denunciation of it was so fearless. To all things untrue and base His very presence was a rebuke. In the light of His purity, men saw themselves unclean, their life’s aims mean and false. Yet He drew them. He who had created man, understood the value of humanity. Evil He denounced as the foe of those whom He was seeking to bless and to save. In every human being, however fallen, He beheld a son of God, one who might be restored to the privilege of his divine relationship. {Ed 79.1}

Christ reached the people where they were. He presented the plain truth to their minds in the most forcible, simple language. The humble poor, the most unlearned, could comprehend, through faith in Him, the most exalted truths. No one needed to consult the learned doctors as to His meaning. He did not perplex the ignorant with mysterious inferences, or use unaccustomed and learned words, of which they had no knowledge. The greatest Teacher the world has ever known, was the most definite, simple, and practical in His instruction. {GW 49.3}

Since Jesus came to dwell with us, we know that God is acquainted with our trials, and sympathizes with our griefs. Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners. For in every doctrine of grace, every promise of joy, every deed of love, every divine attraction presented in the Saviour’s life on earth, we see “God with us.” {DA 24.1}

The Lord could have cut off the sinner, and utterly destroyed him; but the costlier plan was chosen. In His great love He provides hope for the hopeless, giving His only-begotten Son to bear the sins of the world. And since He has poured out all heaven in that one rich gift, He will withhold from man no needed aid that he may take the cup of salvation, and become an heir of God, joint heir with Christ. {1SM 323.1}

Christ alone was able to represent the Deity. He who had been in the presence of the Father from the beginning, He who was the express image of the invisible God, was alone sufficient to accomplish this work. No verbal description could reveal God to the world. Through a life of purity, a life of perfect trust and submission to the will of God, a life of humiliation such as even the highest seraph in heaven would have shrunk from, God Himself must be revealed to

humanity. In order to do this, our Saviour clothed His divinity with humanity. He employed the human faculties, for only by adopting these could He be comprehended by humanity. Only humanity could reach humanity. He lived out the character of God through the human body which God had prepared for Him. He blessed the world by living out in human flesh the life of God, thus showing that He had the power to unite humanity to divinity (RH June 25, 1895). {7BC 924.6}

The whole world is embraced in the contract of the great plan of redemption (MS 65, 1912). {4BC 1180.5}

Holiness is wholeness to God. The soul is surrendered to God. The will, and even the thoughts, are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of Jesus fills the soul, and is constantly going out in a clear, refreshing stream, to make glad the hearts of others (MS 33, 1911). {6BC 1076.2}

His angels are appointed to watch over us, and if we put ourselves under their guardianship, then in every time of danger they will be at our right hand. When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, prompting us to a better course, choosing our words for us, and influencing our actions. Thus our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world. {COL 341.2}

Righteous words and deeds have a more powerful influence for good than all the sermons that can be preached.—ML 114. {VSS 52.1}

When the grace of God reigns within, the soul will be surrounded with an atmosphere of faith and courage and Christlike love, an atmosphere invigorating to the spiritual life of all who inhale it. . . . Those who are humble in heart the Lord will use to reach souls whom the ordained ministers cannot approach. They will be moved to speak words which reveal the saving grace of Christ. {AG 238.5}

And in blessing others they will themselves be blessed. God gives us the opportunity to impart grace, that He may refill us with increased grace. Hope and faith will strengthen as the agent for God works with the talents and facilities that God has provided. He will have a divine agency to work with him. {AG 238.6}

The humblest and poorest of the disciples of Jesus can be a blessing to others. They may not realize that they are doing any special good, but by their unconscious influence they may start waves of blessings that will widen and deepen, and the blessed results they may never know till the day of final reward. They are not required to weary themselves with anxiety about success. They have only to go forward quietly, doing faithfully the work God's providence assigns, and their life will not be in vain. Their own souls will be growing more and more into the likeness of

Christ; they are workers together with God in this life, and are thus fitting for the higher work and the unshadowed joy of the life to come (*Signs of the Times*, Aug. 6, 1902). {LHU 276.6}

The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied. While the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, angels will shield the righteous and supply their wants. To him that “walketh righteously” is the promise: “Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.” Isaiah 33:15, 16; 41:17. {GC 629.2}

We know that in sadness and grief we feel very frail, but we know that Jesus is right by our side to sympathize with us, and He will help us. We can commune with our best Friend; He is right by our side. We need not go into the heavens to bring Him down, for He is right by us to help us. {CTr 42.4}

God lives and reigns. We have a living and a risen Saviour. He has a care for you.... He has never proved false; He has never deceived you. He will be your guide and deliverer in the most trying circumstances. He will be at your right hand. We are every moment girded with His power and surrounded by His presence as really as were the Israelites in the midst of the divided sea. {UL 276.3}

You must learn the simple art of taking God at His word; then you have solid ground beneath your feet. {ML 10.8}

The battlements of heaven are thronged with a great crowd of angels watching the conflict of human beings with the prince of darkness. . . .With intense interest they watch to see if the child of God, harassed, perplexed, persecuted, denounced, defamed, and condemned as was the Master, will look to heaven for strength. Heaven waits our demand upon its resources.—*Manuscript 38*, 1887. {CTr 325.6}

Christ knows our weakness, and to Him we can go daily for help. It is not necessary for us to gain strength a month ahead. We are to conquer from day to day (MS 28, 1886). {7BC 974.3}

The promise is not that we will have strength today for a future emergency, that anticipated future trouble will be provided for beforehand, before it comes to us. We may, if we walk by faith, expect strength and provision for us as fast as our circumstances demand it. We live by faith, not by sight. The Lord’s arrangement is for us to ask Him for the very things that we need. The grace of tomorrow will not be given today. Men’s necessity is God’s opportunity. . . . {OHC 125.2}

We can but look onward to new perplexities in the coming conflict, but we may well look on what is past as well as what is to come, and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (1 Samuel 7:12). "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deuteronomy 33:25). The trial will not exceed the strength which shall be given us to bear it. {TDG 58.3}

God's everlasting arm encircles the soul that turns to Him for aid, however feeble that soul may be. {4T 328.1}

God has the world in His hand. We have God on our side. All heaven is waiting and longing for our cooperation. The Lord is supreme. Why then should we fear? The Lord is almighty; why should we tremble? In the past God has delivered His people, and He will be our helper if we will arise in His strength and go forward. {TMK 342.3}

Our God is a very present help in time of need. He is acquainted with the most secret thoughts of our hearts, with all the intents and purposes of our souls. When we are in perplexity, even before we open to Him our distresses, He is making arrangements for our deliverance.—Letter 73, Feb. 1, 1905, to Drs. D. H. and Laretta Kress. {UL 46.6}