

*The  
Hebrew  
Prophets*



———— JUBILEE SERIES ————

ADULT TEACHER'S MANUAL  
WINTER 2016-17

# Adult Teacher’s Manual

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# CONTENTS



	Editorial . . . . .	3
December 4	Samuel: Stabilizer of the Kingdom . . . . .	5
December 11	Nathan: Prophet of Righteous Justice . . . . .	13
December 18	Elijah and Elisha: Two Sides of One Coin . . . . .	21
December 25	Jonah: The Preaching Prophet . . . . .	27
January 1	Hosea: Prophet of Love and Forgiveness . . . . .	34
January 8	Joel: Prophet of Pentecost . . . . .	40
January 15	Isaiah: The Messianic Prophet . . . . .	46
January 22	Micah: Prophet of Right Living . . . . .	52
January 29	Habakkuk and Zephaniah: Prophets of Prayer and Song . . . . .	59
February 5	Jeremiah and Ezekiel: Prophets in Exile . . . . .	66
February 12	Daniel: Prophet of the Ages . . . . .	74
February 19	Haggai and Zechariah: Prophets of Encouragement . . . . .	81
February 26	John the Baptist: No Greater Prophet . . . . .	89

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## HOPE IN THE MIDST OF DESTRUCTION

by Karen Myers



In studying this series of lessons on the Hebrew prophets, one might become somewhat depressed with all the prophecies of destruction and captivity. However, among the dire prophesies of destruction, a merciful God provided messages of hope.

We find in the Book of Isaiah a number of prophecies regarding the Messiah. Perhaps the most often quoted prophecy is Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

As we study these lessons, it would be good to keep in mind that the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of God's chosen people did not come about by happenstance. Life is a series of choices, and choices have consequences. When the Israelites chose to worship God and follow His precepts, they enjoyed God's blessings. But when they chose to turn from serving Jehovah and began to worship the gods of the Canaanites, they brought upon themselves the wrath of God because of their disobedience and refusal to repent in spite of the prophets' warnings.

We should also focus on God's mercy. Even in the Book of Jeremiah, written by the "weeping prophet," in the midst of gloom and doom we find gems of encouragement and hope.

*"For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it" (Jeremiah 30:3). (See also Jeremiah 30:17-22; 32:37-44; 33:7-14.)*

*"Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?" (Jeremiah 32:27).*

*"Ah Lord GOD! Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee" (Jeremiah 32:17).*

Although the Hebrew prophets lived thousands of years ago, these studies teach lessons for our benefit today. For example, in spite of Hosea's heart-rending life with Gomer, he was able to forgive her. He rescued her from being sold as a slave on the auction block and paid a large sum of money to redeem her. Gomer's story should cause us to cherish the forgiveness we receive from God. In addition, Hosea's forgiveness of Gomer for all the things she did to him should encourage us to forgive. In fact, forgiveness is imperative if we expect God to forgive us: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15).

In the study of the prophet Nathan, we find the value of listening to God-sent counselors. When Nathan confronted King David about his sins of adultery and murder, David immediately acknowledged his sins and was quick to repent. Who knows what would have happened to David had he become stubborn and bitter and ignored Nathan's words?

Rather than getting bogged down in the negativity of the prophecies, let us look for the hope and encouragement given as we learn the lessons God is teaching us through these studies.



## CHRISTMAS LESSON

In this quarter's study, all thirteen lessons focus on one or two prophets. However, for those teachers who would prefer to have a Christmas lesson, we have provided one that you can access by putting this URL in your browser:

<http://pentecostalpublishing.com/files/christmas2016.pdf>

## PRONUNCIATION HELPS

The lessons in this quarter on the Hebrew prophets contain several biblical names that could prove to be a challenge to pronounce. You may want to determine the pronunciation in advance of teaching the lessons. Here are a couple of suggested sources for assistance:

- Some Bibles show the pronunciation of names within the text.
- An audio Bible allows you to hear the pronunciation of names.

These tools, in addition to the Adult Teacher's Manual, will aid you in preparing for an engaging lesson.



# SAMUEL: STABILIZER OF THE KINGDOM

WEEK 1  
12.04.16

## FOCUS VERSE

### Hebrews 12:28

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

## LESSON TEXT

### I Samuel 7:3-15

3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

4 Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.

6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.

8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.

10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.



## FOCUS THOUGHT

God has chosen to utilize human voices to stabilize, direct, exhort, and comfort His people.



# CULTURE CONNECTION

## Happy Ever After

All things living, growing, moving, multiplying, or dividing depend upon stabilizers to function properly and survive. Cars have stabilizer bars to keep them from rolling in turns. Electric supply lines have transformers, rockets have gyroscopes, hospitals have emergency rooms, and children have parents, grandparents, and friends. Churches have pastors and teachers. Christians have the Lord Jesus. To enact radical change with no stabilizer is unwise, even an invitation to failure and disaster.

One of the greatest transitions of life is that of marriage. When two people come together, they often come from different family backgrounds, cultures, and traditions. They may differ in the amount of wealth they have

and the level of education attained. Their dreams and desires may be different. The process of marriage from singles to unions, to family, to multifamily is a path with many transitions. Stabilizers are necessary in the union for it to be a happy and successful marriage.

Fawn Weaver, in her book *Happy Wives Club*, interviewed ten thousand couples in 110 countries to identify practices happy couples had in common. Number four in her list of six is spirituality. "While the couples may not have all agreed on who or what they believe God to be, all believed in a higher power. They had a healthy fear of disappointing that higher power in relationship to their spouses," wrote Weaver.

### OUTLINE

#### I. THE NEED FOR STABILITY

- A. A New Nation
- B. Entrenched Enemies
- C. Israel in Transition

#### II. THE NEED FOR GOD'S VOICE

- A. The Prophet's Voice
- B. Ever-Present Enemies
- C. Abiding Peace

#### III. PRESERVING GOD'S VOICE

- A. Samuel Facilitated Peace
- B. Preservation Is Vital

#### IV. GOD'S VOICE TODAY

- A. Peter's Reference
- B. Today's Preacher
- C. The Sure Anchor

### CONTEMPLATING THE TOPIC

Five hundred years had passed since the tribes of Israel crossed over Jordan into the Promised Land. After Joshua's death and the death of the generation of Israelites at that

time, the people of Israel fell into a cycle of (1) forsaking God and turning to the gods of the Canaanites, which provoked God to anger; (2) being delivered into the hands of their enemies as God's punishment; (3) crying out to the Lord for deliverance.

In response, God would raise up a judge to deliver the people from their oppression. Generally the people served God and enjoyed peace as long as the judge lived; then they began the cycle again by forsaking God and turning to idolatry. Stability was subject to the influence and longevity of the individual judges.

God had given favor to Israel in fulfilling His promise to Joshua to go before him and drive out the people of the land. But victory had been slow in coming with groups such as the Jebusites still among the people (Judges 1:21). The time had come for the twelve tribes to be solidified into a unified nation. A strong transitional leader was needed, and God chose Samuel as His representative voice during the transition to a nation.

Samuel was the last of the judges and the first of the prophets for the united kingdom.

Samuel's first prophecy came quite early in life. (See I Samuel 3:10–18.) "And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD" (I Samuel 3:19–20).

Samuel was to be the principle stabilizer for the new nation. When the people of Israel cried for a king to rule over them, Samuel orchestrated the transition and brought the nation into a central civil government under the law of Moses. Samuel set the pace for future Hebrew prophets to prophesy and to establish relationships of influence with Israel's kings and people.

The Hebrew prophets continued until John the Baptist, the last of the Hebrew prophets. John also served as a transitional prophet to bring into focus the Kingdom era, the church age.

Samuel was the greatest of the judges, and Jesus said John the Baptist was the greatest of the prophets (Luke 7:28). Both were chosen of God as stabilizers in unusual times of transition. To make possible the greatest of all transitions, that from sinner to saint, God took on the likeness of man and humbled himself unto death to offer hope and life eternal to believers (Philippians 2:6–8). The voice of God, through the incarnation of Jesus Christ, preached the message of salvation to open the doors to the kingdom of God. Jesus was a prophet like no other, who spoke like no other, so all could be saved.

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### I. THE NEED FOR STABILITY

Christians grow in grace and mature spiritually in Christ in three stages: First is conversion, the experience of salvation (repentance, baptism in the name of Jesus, and the infilling of the Holy Spirit). Next is the development of a healthy relationship between the believer and the Lord. This is the stabilizer of the Christian's faith and the key to growth and maturity. Last is the element of service, the fulfillment of purpose that makes one's faith meaningful and joyful.

For balance and spiritual growth to occur, there must be stabilizers, for the winds of

adversity will blow. Stabilizing roots in past experiences are essential in order to grow into the next stage of maturity or achievement. The Hebrew prophets were the stabilizers for the emerging nation of Israel and her kings.

### A. A New Nation

Through the twenty-five centuries from Adam to Moses, God's relationship with humanity progressed from individuals, as in Adam and Noah; to families such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; to tribes, as were the sons of Jacob; and ultimately to the nation of Israel. He intended for Israel to become His voice of righteousness to all people. He desired for Israel to become a holy nation that would function as priests to the world (Exodus 19:6).

God's covenant with Abraham was for both his descendants and for the land of Canaan. Following the exodus from Egypt and the conquest of the land under Joshua, the sons of Jacob had multiplied and became a powerful people. The time to become a nation had arrived, and the people of Israel were ready for their king. They had the law of Moses, the Tabernacle and the priesthood, and a stately history of miracles and military victories. God had blessed them with favor in a land of milk and honey. It was time for them to become a nation and step into the fullness of God's plan for Israel.

The people desired a king, God granted their request, and a young nation was born. It was to be a nation of promise, of blessing, and of purpose. Israel was to be in the world but not of the world. It was a new nation strategically placed at the crossroads of the world as a beacon of light for God's message of love and holiness.

### B. Entrenched Enemies

God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham when he left Ur of the Chaldeans. Everywhere his foot stepped was to be his. Hundreds of years later his descendants had possessed the land, but they had failed to drive out some of its inhabitants, who became entrenched enemies of Israel.

The Philistines were particularly troublesome. They had won a battle near Ebenezer killing thirty-four thousand Israelites and capturing the Ark of the Covenant. The two

sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed in the battle. When word came to Eli of the death of his sons and the captured Ark, he fell backwards from his seat, broke his neck, and died. That same day his daughter-in-law, wife of Phinehas, died in childbirth. Before her death, she named her son Ichabod, saying, "The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken" (I Samuel 4:22).

When the Ark was returned seven months later, it was not properly respected by the men of Bethshemesh. Consequently, the Lord smote them with a great slaughter, causing deep lamentation among the people (I Samuel 6:19). The Ark was then taken to Kirjathjearim where it remained for twenty years.

Preceding these events, Samuel was a young man in Shiloh ministering in the Lord's house. Eli was old, his two evil sons were serving as priests, the word of the Lord was precious, and there was no vision. (See I Samuel 3:1.) The Lord revealed to Samuel the judgment He was to bring against Eli's house, and Samuel told Eli the vision. The word of that vision spread throughout all Israel. As Samuel grew, his word was revered; all of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew he was established to be a prophet of the Lord. (See I Samuel 3:11–21.)

The new nation of Israel was destined to be born in the midst of trouble from her enemies without and from the lack of spiritual leadership within. But the Lord was preparing Samuel to become the prophet and judge during the transition. Samuel was destined to be a great leader because the word of the Lord was imparted to him and flowed from him to the people.

## C. Israel in Transition

Transition is a continuing process of life. When Abraham left Ur of the Chaldeans, he embarked on a course of continual change and transition. "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). His great grandchildren, the sons of Jacob, became the nucleus of the nation of Israel. Their heritage was that of continual transition.

A thousand years after Abraham, Samuel guided Israel through a difficult transition of

becoming a nation. And a thousand years after Samuel, John the Baptist introduced another great change with the coming of the kingdom of God in Christ Jesus. Another transition awaits believers. New Jerusalem is the city of God where Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us. We must continue to look for it until our final change comes.

## II. THE NEED FOR GOD'S VOICE

The voice of the Lord as the original expression of God is the source of all life. On the first day of creation, "God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). God spoke in like manner for each of the creative days. Adam identified God by His voice as He walked in the Garden (Genesis 3:10).

Obedience to God's voice brought life, while disobedience brought death. All life naturally and spiritually is sustained by His voice. In the end, it will be the voice of the Lord that says, "Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:23). To maintain fellowship with God, we must hear the voice of the Lord whether it is by the Spirit, the printed Word, visions and dreams, or preaching and teaching. (See Revelation 3:20–22.)

### A. The Prophet's Voice

When Samuel was yet a child, his mother presented him to the Lord in an act of worship. (See I Samuel 1:28.) He grew up in the house of the Lord where he ministered to the Lord and to Eli. (See I Samuel 2:11, 18; 3:1.) What he first learned of the Lord's ways came from his mother, his association with Eli the priest, those who came to worship, and his service to the Lord. How important it is for children to find worship and meaningful association at an early age in the house of the Lord. These things greatly influence a profitable life of service in Christ Jesus.

When the Lord called Samuel for the first time, Samuel thought the voice was Eli's voice. The Lord favored Samuel but had not yet spoken to him (I Samuel 3:7). Two important things emerge with this experience. First, Samuel equated the voice of the Lord to that of Eli. God most often speaks to us through familiar channels. Second, when Samuel told Eli about the vision, he was speaking what the



Lord spoke to him. The voice of the prophet speaks what the Lord would say unto us. In essence, Samuel's voice became the voice of the Lord. Therein is the prophet's authority.

Because of the vision, Samuel's voice was established in all Israel as that of an emerging prophet, for all his words were reliable. Eli confirmed and accepted Samuel's vision as being from the Lord (I Samuel 3:18–19) for God had earlier sent a man of God to Eli with the same message concerning his sons (I Samuel 2:27–36). That man also said God would raise up a faithful priest to walk before His anointed forever (speaking of Zadok the priest and David the king). What Eli already knew, and possibly was reluctant to accept from the first prophetic voice, was confirmed by Samuel, an innocent but spiritually sensitive child. God's judgment of Eli's house was probably already suspected by the people, which gave Samuel's voice credibility.

It is amazing how the voice of a true prophet rings true in the hearts and minds of people.

## **B. Ever-Present Enemies**

Samuel lived during troublesome times. Corruption was prevalent. The Word of God was precious (rare) and there was no vision. The people had gone after strange gods, including Ashtaroth, the Canaanite goddess of love and fertility. And the Philistines reigned and ruled.

After twenty years, Israel began to lament before the Lord and He heard their cry. Samuel's voice was heard once again as he called the Israelites to repent and turn back to God, which they did and put away their gods of Baalim and Ashtaroth to serve the Lord only (I Samuel 7:4).

When the Philistines heard that Israel was gathered together and fasting in Mispeh, they came down against them for battle. But the Lord had seen the repentance of Israel, accepted Samuel's sacrifice, and honored his prayer by sending a great thunder to cause panic among the Philistines. The Philistines were defeated. When we hear the voice of the Lord and turn from our wicked ways, we will experience victory over our enemies. For "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

## **C. Abiding Peace**

Samuel is a symbol of peace in a troubled world. Everything around him seemed to be in turmoil and struggle. Yet he possessed a steady, calm, stabilizing walk with the Lord. From his birth to his death, difficulties were present, but his actions expressed a confidence in God that depicted internal peace. After the "men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them," Samuel placed a stone between Mizpeh and Shen and named it Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the LORD helped us" (I Samuel 7:11–12). When we hear the voice of the Lord and obey His commands, He can help us and give us peace even in the midst of turmoil.

## **III. PRESERVING GOD'S VOICE**

It is vital that we diligently seek to preserve the ability to hear the voice of the Lord. For through His voice life first came into the world and is continually sustained. Outside of Christ there is neither abundant life nor life eternal, for He is the only mediator between God and man. His name is the only saving name, and His voice alone calls to salvation. His voice is also the one of final judgment before whom all will stand, both small and great. Jesus said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). To live acceptably before Christ, we must hear His voice and walk in His ways (Hebrews 12:28). Only then can we expect to hear Him say, "Well done."

## **A. Samuel Facilitated Peace**

After Samuel set up the Ebenezer stone declaring God's help in the battle of Mizpeh, he continued to judge Israel for the rest of his life (I Samuel 7:12–15). The Philistines were subdued and came no more into the coast of Israel. As long as Samuel lived, the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines. The peace in Israel and the freedom the people enjoyed from their archenemy was clearly connected to Samuel's presence. His voice brought repentance to the people, his voice entreated the Lord to help them in battle, and his voice declared peace to Israel with the erection of the Ebenezer stone. When Israel