

## Lesson from the Old Testament: Follow the Prophet

Submitted by Ron Bartholomew for Education Week 2005

Lessons we can learn from the Old Testament about the importance of following the prophet.

1. 2 Kings 5:13 (the story of Naaman the Leper). **Lesson #1-the small and simple things the Lord asks us to do through prophets make all the difference.** Naaman wanted Elisha to command him to do "some great thing," but when his servants convince him to wash in the Jordan River as the prophet had asked, it cleanses and saves him. Do the little things the Prophet has asked-don't always be looking for "some great thing." See also 1 Nephi 17:41; Alma 33:19-22; Alma 37:41-47. (Sarah Clark-confession healed her).
2. 1 Kings 17:13 (the story of the Widow of Zarephath). **Lesson #2-Give your best and your all to the Lord first-don't be tentative or hold anything back.** If the Prophet's requests seem unreasonable, demanding, or out of the question, have the faith to follow and you will be blessed. Elijah asks the widow to give her last meal to him first, and then promises there will be enough food for her and her starving son. Not only is that promise fulfilled for "many days," when her son later dies he raises him from the dead-all because she had the faith to give all she had to the Lord first (Ether 12:6-the blessing comes after the trial of your faith).
3. 1 Kings 18:18-40 (the story of the contest with the priests of Baal). **Lesson #3-How many miracles will we have to witness before we finally make up our minds to throw our whole soul into this great work?** These people had seen miracles before, and they witness a great miracle here. What great miracles are we waiting for before we finally decide to commit wholeheartedly to the Lord and His Church? Elijah challenged: "How long halt ye between two opinions?" Are you still trying to decide which side of the line you are on? Quote: Bishop Glen L. Pace in Conference Report, (Ensign, November) 1992, pp. 11-12.
4. 1 Kings 19:19-21 (the story of Elijah throwing his "mantle" on Elisha). **Lesson #4-when the Lord calls-go and do the thing he has called you to do.** Elisha didn't stop to see if the mantle Elijah had given him "fit," he tried his best to do the work the Lord called him to do. It is not our place to decide if a call from the Lord "is right for us," it is our place to accept and serve and go and do. Quote: Elder Boyd K. Packer, on never refusing a call to serve the Lord, in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 7; or Ensign, Nov. 1997, 8
5. 1 Kings 22:18 (The story of King Jehosaphat and King Ahab inquiring of Micaiah about whether or not they should attack Syria). **Lesson #5: We have to accept all of that comes from the Prophet, whether we agree or not. Beware of false prophets that will only tell you what you want to hear. The Lord's prophet will only tell you what you need to hear, and that at times may not be what you wanted to hear.** When these two Kings seek advice from their false prophets, they tell them exactly what they want to hear (the good report). When they ask Micaiah, the Lord's true prophet, he sarcastically answers the same as their false prophets, because that is what they wanted to hear. When they press him for "the truth (see v. 16)," he gives them "an evil report," or in other words, tells them to abandon their plan to attack Syria or they will be sorry. King Ahab complains that Micaiah never tells him what he wants to hear. He puts Micaiah in prison on a diet of bread and water, and rejects his counsel, but Micaiah's counsel was right, and the two kings who followed the false prophets and their "good reports" lose the battle as well as their lives. Quote: President Harold B. Lee in Conference Report, October 1970, pp. 152-on following the prophet whether he "agrees" with you or not.
6. 2 Kings 2:23-25 (the story of Elisha and the she bears). **Lesson #6-don't make the same mistake and mock the prophet and accuse him of being "old-fashioned" or "out-of-touch with reality."** These youths (see footnote correction) make the

- mistake of mocking the prophet with words that meant, "Go away, you old man." When 2 she bears come out and tear the youths to pieces, they receive their just reward. I wonder how many scares we would have if we got attacked by bears every time we ignore or reject the counsel of our prophet as "old fashioned" or "out of date?"
7. 2 Kings 4:8-37; 8:1-6: (The story of the Shunammite woman who builds a room on her house for Elisha to stay in while he is passing by). **Lesson #7-If you will make "room" for the Prophet in your life-by reading and pondering his words and messages, and listening and following them, you will be blessed.** This great woman actually has a room added onto her existing home for the prophet to stay in on his journeys to and from. As a result, he blesses her to be able to bear a son (she is barren) and then when the son dies, he raises him from the dead. Later, when there is a seven-year drought, he makes special arrangements for this woman and her family to live in another country and then return to their property and belongings after the famine is over.
  8. 2 Kings 6:24-7 (especially 7:1-2)-(the story of the famine and the abatement of the famine). **Lesson #8: The wisdom of God and his prophets is often considered foolishness to men. Never say never to the words or promises of a prophet. Faith is believing in things we can't see, that are true.** The famine in Israel is so long and hard people finally resort to cannibalism. When Elisha prophesies that on the next day there will be so much food to eat that the prices in the market place will reach an all time low, a "lord" (ruler in the king's household) scorns him and says it is impossible. Elijah replies that it will not only happen, but this man will see it with his eyes but never get to eat any of the food. That night, the Lord scares the Syrian army away and they leave all of their provisions behind. In the morning, the provisions are discovered and the man who scoffed at the words of the prophet sees the food but is trampled to death by the rush of the Israelites and never gets to eat any of the food.