

The Complaints of Prophets 08-30-20

My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. James 5:10

What is the work of a prophet? Prophets were men and women who received a “burden” from God in the form of an oracle. They were one of two types: a warning or admonition (most prophecies were God trying to correct sinful behavior) and foretelling an event of the future.

Prophets in the Old Testament suffered greatly for their work. Consider that Great prophet Moses in Numbers 11:10-17. His plea to God: “please kill me here and now”. Elijah was one of the most important prophets of the Old Testament, and in 1 Kings 19:3-14 “he prayed that he might die”. Jonah in Jonah 4:1-4 said “please take my life”. Jeremiah in Jeremiah 20:14-18 declared “Let the man be cursed whodid not kill me from the womb”.

The complaints of the prophets were often the same. No one listened. Their efforts were in vain. God was not helping them or God was making it too hard on them. Perhaps God was unjust. They all seemed to conclude the same: “I wish I was dead”! But God heard their complaints. He gently reminded them of His purposes and He repeatedly corrected their hearts. In some cases He firmly reproved their bad attitudes.

Prophets still exist today. Christians are those who put on Christ in baptism. In putting on Christ we put on the very name and power of that name: Christ, which means anointed (Prophet, High Priest, King). Saints are also priests and kings (*He has made us kings and priests to His God and Father* - Revelation 1:6). This is the nature of a “royal priesthood”. As such we are also PROPHETS of God.

How are we prophets today? Like the prophets of old, we too have a message from God: the Law of Christ. *“If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ”* (1 Peter 4:11a). We ARE the oracles of God, the very messages of God to men. As well, we do have given to us by the Holy Spirit a message to all men, the most important foretelling of all time: the end of all things. “For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night..... but you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Thessalonians 5:2,4).

This is why we are to consider the prophets of old. Their sufferings are the same as ours. We too complain that no one listens, that our efforts appear in vain, and that God is not helping us. So God’s responses still bear out today. No one listens? His word ALWAYS works (Isaiah 55:11). Our efforts appear in vain? We cannot always see the results of our labors (1 Kings 19:18). God is not helping us? God has a plan for our encouragement (Numbers 11:16-17). God is making it too hard? He provides us helpers in the church (Exodus 4:14). God is not fair? God is merciful instead (Jonah 4:11).

Prophets suffered much. It was physical and emotional. It was the Burden of the Word of God. But they were blessed too. They knew what God had in store for them. At the end of Daniel’s life a promise was made to him that is for us too: “But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.” Daniel 12:13

Be the prophet of God, and consider the prophets of old for your encouragement.