

Lesson 1: The Time of the Prophets

Objectives: Students will...

- 1) Learn why God used prophets and who could be a prophet Deuteronomy 18:14-22
- 2) Learn why we no longer have or need prophets today
- 3) Understand the “types” of prophets – those who wrote prophecies down and those who didn’t
- 4) Understand the differences between the Major and Minor Prophets
- 5) Begin to recognize the timeline and chronology of the time of the prophets

Accommodations: How will I accommodate individual needs of students?

- Some students at this age will still have trouble writing/reading so during paper activities help ensure children understand by reading instructions aloud so they can follow along.
- Help students who have difficulty sitting for long periods by sitting beside them to help them stay focused.
- Check on students and if you notice one has difficulty offer to help write part of a sentence or a word for them, or repeat the instructions as needed.
- If some questions are too advanced for your group of students, feel free to adjust or minimize the amount of questions asked.

Supplies: Coordinator will ensure these supplies are ready for you in advance. If not discuss with him/her.

Teacher Materials (provided in classroom)

- Bible(s)
- Markers/Pencil Crayons
- Pens/Pencils
- Attendance Chart (See Template)
- Stickers for Attendance
- Lesson Review Visual Aids – one for teacher to share at the beginning of each class
- Prophets Timeline Chart – one per student to keep in class for duration of lessons
- Prophets Timeline Chart – answer key – one for teacher
- Prophets Quiz Sheet – one per student



Optional:

- Matching Game – one set per two students cut out before class on cardstock paper
- Overview of Old Testament Books of Prophets – one per older student/teacher (keep for later)

Snack:

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| - Strawberries (cut into mouth shapes) | a few for each student |
| - Napkins | one per student |
| - Water/Cup | one per student |

Lesson:

1) Introduction to Lesson

5 minutes

As students enter, welcome them and help find a chair to sit at. Thank them for coming.

Take attendance (using attendance chart supplied). Write in the name of each student on the chart and let each child put a sticker beside their name for this week.

Introduce yourself to the students, and if unfamiliar with their names, ask children to go around the room sharing their name so you can learn them. Say to students:

This quarter we will study the time of the prophets. We just completed the time of the kings. Can anyone remember what were some major things that happened during the time of the kings?

Israel and Judah divided, Israel had all evil kings who led the people away from God, the result was captivity into Assyria – the Israelites never returned to their land but were scattered, those who did remain intermarried and became known as the Samaritans. The two southern tribes of Judah, had some good and bad kings, they eventually were taken into captivity by the Babylonians. Later a small group would return thanks to God.

2) The Time of the Prophets

15-20 minutes

Say: If we are going to study the prophets, we should ask what does “prophet” mean? A prophet is a speaker for God. One who speaks the words and thoughts of God whether the words relate to the past, present, or future. In the Bible a prophet could be called a “man of God”, “prophet”, or “seer”. Their prophecies could have an immediate and a future fulfillment. For example, they might say that an event was going to happen shortly, but that same event might also relate to the coming of Jesus.

*The following verses are just for reference, students do not need to go there unless they have a specific question.

We have already studied many prophets already: Enoch, Abraham (Genesis 20:7), Moses (Numbers 12:6-8, Deuteronomy 18:15-18), Samuel who was a prophet through the reign of Saul and the one who anointed David. Nathan a prophet of God during David’s reign, and more. But though there are many prophets in the Bible, not all of them had their own book. So even though Moses was one of the great prophets, there is not a book of Moses. Instead he is spoken of throughout the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. He wrote the first five books of the Old Testament but none are named after him. For the prophets who have a book, it is because these are prophets that spoke God’s word and also wrote it down. We might also have heard that in the Bible there are what are called “Major” and “Minor” prophets. The only difference is the length of their books, not the importance of them or their message from God.

Hand out Bibles as needed. **Let’s all turn in our Bibles to Deuteronomy 18. Deuteronomy is the 5th book of the Old Testament. Even from way back then, God gave rules and commands about prophets.** While students look for the book and chapter explain:

At this point in the Bible, Moses recounts to the Israelites the time that God had called the Israelites to Mount Sinai. They were so afraid to approach God, they told Moses to go to God and speak to them on God’s behalf so they would not have to approach God on their own. God allowed their request to have Moses speak on God’s behalf to the people. Now in Deuteronomy Moses is speaking about the people that Israel is to conquer. The people they were to conquer did not listen to God but to people that would call on evil spirits, or make things up to get the people to believe in what they said. God says the Israelites were not to follow them. God also tells the people that God will raise a Prophet from among them, they were to listen to Him and follow Him. God is speaking of Jesus!

Let’s read Deuteronomy 18:14-15 and see what God says through Moses.

Questions:

God says He will raise up a Prophet. Is that prophet with a capital letter or small letter? Capital. Go to verse 20, is the prophet spoken of there with a capital or small letter? Small.

So by looking at verse 15 we know that God is speaking of someone really special because the term “Prophet” is capitalized.

Where would this Prophet come from look at verse 15 again? From among them.

God said this special Prophet would come from the Israelites, after the time of Abraham had already passed. There are some false religions today that say a special prophet came after Jesus, but none of those were from the Israelites. They were and are false prophets. Only Jesus is the true Prophet that God is speaking of here.

Read **Deuteronomy 18:15-19**

Why do we have prophets according to verse 16? Because the people of Israel asked for one because they were afraid to hear from the voice of God directly.

What would happen to the people if they did not listen to the capital letter “Prophet”? They would be in big trouble!

Read **Deuteronomy 18:20-22**

What does God say about people speaking lies saying they are speaking from God? They were to die.

How could they (and us) recognize a false prophet? If what they said did not happen, or was against God, or was spoken of in the name of a false god than that prophet was false.

What was the consequence for speaking falsely? They were to be killed.

Read **Deuteronomy 13:1-5**

What was the test of a prophet? His words come true! And his message would be in harmony and agree with all previous revelation or words of God. They could not introduce strange things.

3) Activity Sheet

10 minutes

Hand out one Prophet Quiz to each student along with a pencil.

As a class let’s go through the activity sheet to learn about the prophets. Use the words in the box on the right to fill in the missing words. You can either write the whole word in or write the number it matches, so if the answer is Jesus – you could write “Jesus” or the number “1” in the blank space. You might need to use a word more than once. Any questions?

Answer Key:

- 7. Speaker
- 3. Point
- 5. Back
- 6. Teach
- 4. King
- 1. Jesus
- 2. Prophets
- 1. Jesus
- 1. Jesus

Prophets Quiz

You have words to be used to fill in the missing words. You might need to use a word more than once.

Who is a prophet?
A _____ of the God. One who speaks the words and messages of the Creator to the people in the past, present, or future.

1. Jesus
2. Prophets
3. Point
4. King
5. Back
6. Teach
7. Speaker

1. What were the main goals of a prophet?
He _____ the people _____ to God.
He _____ of _____ as the Spiritual Ruler and _____.

2. Why does God send prophets today?
Reference: 1: 1-2
I had a lot of trouble and I wanted to know if I was doing it right. I was told by the prophets, "You are doing it right because you are following the Spirit of God. You are doing it right because you are following the Spirit of God."

3. What does God speak through today?
Reference: 1: 1-2
I had a lot of trouble and I wanted to know if I was doing it right. I was told by the prophets, "You are doing it right because you are following the Spirit of God. You are doing it right because you are following the Spirit of God."

4. How many times did Jesus speak to the prophets?
Reference: 1: 1-2
I had a lot of trouble and I wanted to know if I was doing it right. I was told by the prophets, "You are doing it right because you are following the Spirit of God. You are doing it right because you are following the Spirit of God."

5. Who were the prophets? The _____.
6. Who was the last prophet?
7. What does that show about prophets?
8. What does that show about prophets?
9. What does that show about prophets?
10. What does that show about prophets?

Jesus is the greatest Prophet. We will speak of Jesus in further detail in later lessons.

Have students finish their activity sheets. Ask students if they have any questions while they work.

4) Prophets Timeline

5 minutes

Hand out one sheet to each student. You will gather them up again for later use. Read through the top part of the sheet showing the different times that the prophets we will study were prophesying. Show the difference between the prophets that spoke during the divided kingdoms, those that spoke mainly after the fall of Israel and those who spoke during and after Judah’s captivity.

Prophets			
Prophets who spoke during times of the divided kingdom and what was			
*Times and order are based on historical evidence and verses			
Divided Kingdoms	Fall of Israel	Fall of Judah	
Prophets in Israel	Prophets in Judah	Prophets in Captivity	Prophets in Exile
Prophets in Israel	Prophets in Judah	Prophets in Captivity	Prophets in Exile
Isaiah (King Hezekiah)	Jeremiah (King Zedekiah)	Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Haggai (King Darius)
Amos (King Jeroboam II)	Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Haggai (King Darius)	Zachariah (King Darius)
Hosea (King Zedekiah)	Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Haggai (King Darius)	Zachariah (King Darius)
Joel (King Uzziah)	Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Haggai (King Darius)	Zachariah (King Darius)
Obadiah (King Jehoshaphat)	Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Haggai (King Darius)	Zachariah (King Darius)
Jonah (King Manasseh)	Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Haggai (King Darius)	Zachariah (King Darius)
Micah (King Hezekiah)	Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Haggai (King Darius)	Zachariah (King Darius)
Nahum (King Sennacherib)	Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Haggai (King Darius)	Zachariah (King Darius)
Zephaniah (King Josiah)	Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Haggai (King Darius)	Zachariah (King Darius)
Habakkuk (King Josiah)	Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Haggai (King Darius)	Zachariah (King Darius)
Jeremiah (King Zedekiah)	Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Haggai (King Darius)	Zachariah (King Darius)
Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Haggai (King Darius)	Zachariah (King Darius)
Haggai (King Darius)	Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Haggai (King Darius)	Zachariah (King Darius)
Zachariah (King Darius)	Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Haggai (King Darius)	Zachariah (King Darius)
Malachi (King Darius)	Ezekiel (King Zedekiah)	Haggai (King Darius)	Zachariah (King Darius)

Ask them:

Based on what we know about the Israelites in the north disobeying God and never having a good ruler, compared with Judah in the south who sometimes obeyed God and had some good rulers, which would you rather have? The job of speaking to the Israelites or to Judah? Why?

How would you feel having to tell a king that what he was doing was wrong and knowing you might die because of what you said?

These prophets had to face disobedient, ungodly people all the time. Some fled for their lives, some were killed, some spoke until old age. But always, they faced hardships and struggles because of their desire to bring the people back to God.

Do you think it is hard today telling others what God says, especially when people aren't obeying God?

Should we be silent or speak God's words?

How can we help others learn about God and the right thing to do? Talk to God, pray, study to know what is right, work with the church so you have other people around who can help you, share the good news of Jesus, etc.

Keep sheets out if doing the matching game, or put them away and keep for later if not doing the game.

5) Optional: Matching Game – The Time of the Prophets

10 minutes

Hand out one set of cards to every two students, either let them pick who they want to pair up with or you decide. Have prophet timeline sheets available as well.

Elijah	Elijah
Elisha	Elisha
Jonah	Jonah

Have students shuffle and place cards face down and play a game. Each student gets a turn to flip over two cards, if the two cards match, the student keeps the cards, if they don't match, the student has to flip the cards back over. Then the other student gets a turn. Continue playing until all the cards have been matched.

*Make sure you read the names allowed first as most names are difficult to pronounce.

Once they have played a game, have them sort the cards by putting the right prophets with the right time. Use the prophet timeline sheet to help.

For example:

What prophets spoke during the divided kingdoms?

What prophets spoke to Israel? Spoke to Judah?

What were the names given to the Divided Kingdoms? (Judah and Israel)

If time, they can play the matching game again.

6) Learning from the Time of the Prophets

5 minutes

Say: **What did we learn today?** Let students answer. Discuss importance of speaking only the words of God from the Bible, obedience, and doing right.

Who was a prophet? Those who spoke the words of God.

Do we have prophets today? No.

Why not? They are no longer needed. The Bible is complete and Jesus gave us all the words that we need from God to live a Godly life. (See Jude 3, Hebrews 1:1-2, Galatians 1:8, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:3 if you need to clarify)

In the parable of the wicked vinedressers, who was the last one God sent? His Son.

What was the prophet's job? To bring the people _____(back) to God and to teach and prepare the way for _____(Jesus).

Optional questions to ask:

What did you like best about today's Bible reading?

What questions do you have about today's lesson?

I encourage you to read 1 Kings 18-19 at home this week which will prepare you for the first prophet we will learn about next week - Elijah.

7) Old Testament Overview *For older students

5-10 minutes

Show students the sheet. (No need to read it)

These are the next books we will be studying this quarter. In the Old Testament we have studied from Genesis to 2 Chronicles. Taking us from Creation to the time of the kings. We will now look at the end of the kings beyond Israel and Judah's captivity and go to the end of the Old Testament ending in Malachi.

On your own read through the different books and what we will be studying. Hand it back in when you are done.

Overview of the Old Testament the Time of the Prophets

Books of the Major Prophets: A prophet was someone who spoke the words of God. Though they did predict future events, their main role was to call God's people back to Him.

Isaiah: (Spoke through representatives referring to himself as the father of all the nations around him and predicted the future of Israel.) He was called to speak to the people of Israel.

Jeremiah: (Spoke prophetically to many nations.) He was called to speak to the people of Israel, but he had to speak to many other nations as well. He was called to speak to the people of Israel, but he had to speak to many other nations as well.

Lamentations: An account of a terrible event that happened to the city of Jerusalem. It is a book of grief and sorrow.

Ezekiel: (Spoke to the people of Israel who were in Babylon.) He often used dramatic metaphors and sometimes acted out his prophecies to make his point.

Daniel: Although he was a captive in Babylon, Daniel became a wise minister to the government there. Daniel lived a life of righteousness, and when he was called to speak to the others.

Books of the Minor Prophets: Considered only minor in that they spoke to a smaller group of people.

Hosea: (Spoke to the people of Israel.) He was called to speak to the people of Israel, but he had to speak to many other nations as well.

Joel: (Spoke to the people of Israel.) He was called to speak to the people of Israel, but he had to speak to many other nations as well.

Amos: (Spoke to the people of Israel.) He was called to speak to the people of Israel, but he had to speak to many other nations as well.

Obadiah: (Spoke to the people of Israel.) He was called to speak to the people of Israel, but he had to speak to many other nations as well.

Jonah: (Spoke to the people of Israel.) He was called to speak to the people of Israel, but he had to speak to many other nations as well.

Micah: (Spoke to the people of Israel.) He was called to speak to the people of Israel, but he had to speak to many other nations as well.

Nahum: (Spoke to the people of Israel.) He was called to speak to the people of Israel, but he had to speak to many other nations as well.

Habakkuk: (Spoke to the people of Israel.) He was called to speak to the people of Israel, but he had to speak to many other nations as well.

Zephaniah: (Spoke to the people of Israel.) He was called to speak to the people of Israel, but he had to speak to many other nations as well.

Haggai: (Spoke to the people of Israel.) He was called to speak to the people of Israel, but he had to speak to many other nations as well.

Zechariah: (Spoke to the people of Israel.) He was called to speak to the people of Israel, but he had to speak to many other nations as well.

Malachi: (Spoke to the people of Israel.) He was called to speak to the people of Israel, but he had to speak to many other nations as well.

8) Learning the Prophets Through Song

5-10 minutes

This quarter we are going to study many prophets. We are going to look specifically at prophets who spoke from the time of the divided kingdom (which we just finished studying during the time of the Kings) from 1 Kings all the way to Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament. We are going to learn to memorize the books of the Bible that speak of different prophets. There are what are called the "Major" and "Minor" prophets. The only difference between these two categories is that the Major prophets had longer books, not that they were any more important than the prophets who wrote smaller books. Go to the front of your Bible and find the Table of Contents. You will see a long list of books of the Bible in the Old Testament. We are going to learn about the prophets. Remembering that the order in the Bible is not necessarily the order in which the prophets lived and worked. But to make it easy for us, we will learn the Books of the Bible in the order listed in the Bible so it will be easier for us as we get older to remember where to find the prophets being discussed.

Sing the Old Testament books to the tune of the Alphabet song. "Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers" (A,B,C,D,E,F,G)... you will have to repeat the alphabet tune twice to get through all the books.

When you get to Song of Solomon, that is when the alphabet tune starts again, that is where you will start each week, even though Song of Solomon is not a prophet book.

Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Repeat this section 2 times each week as a way to practice learning. Encourage students to practice at home as well. You may even decide to offer a prize or praise for each student who can recite all the books of the prophets from memory as you go through the quarter.

Point out to students that Lamentations is a book of sadness that Jeremiah wrote concerning the fall of Jerusalem. All the other names after the book Song of Solomon, are a name of one of the prophets we will be looking at this quarter.

9) Optional: Memory Verse

2-5 minutes

For this quarter, each week have the students go to **Hebrews 1:1-2** in their Bibles and read the verse allowed as a class 2 times. Other options include:

- You saying a word and having them repeat it as you go through the verse
- Have students repeat a small phrase ex: "God, who at various times" a few times before working on the next phrase.
- Have students repeat after each other
- Ask students to think of hand gestures. Ex: Point up when you say "GOD", point to their mouths when they say "SPOKE", etc. and then go through verses as a class with gestures.

Hebrews 1:1-2

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.

10) Optional - Snack: Strawberries (cut to look like mouths)

5 minutes

Hand out a few pieces to each student, ensuring you check for allergies first. Say, **this snack is to remind us that prophets were those who were to speak the words of God. Why did God allow prophets? Raise your hand if you remember?** Because the Israelites coming out of Egypt were afraid to approach God so wanted Moses to speak to them instead. **How could you tell a true from a false prophet?** A true prophet only spoke things that actually came true, a false prophet could be known if what he said did not come true, or if it went against what God had already commanded. **Let's enjoy our little mouth fruits to remind us that prophets were very important and special, they were God's mouth pieces! But now we do not need prophets anymore because Christ was sent last and gave us the final complete words of God in the Bible.**

Provide a napkin for children to clean their hands if needed. Review with students by asking them questions from the lesson again and discuss any questions they have while snacking. What did they like best about today's Bible reading? What questions do they have about today's lesson?

11) Close in prayer

*If desired, ask the children if they have any prayer requests and write them down to help you remember. Then ask all children to bow their heads and fold their hands to pray.

Thank You Lord for all You provide us. Thank You for Your Son who has given us Your complete Words and will through the Bible. Forgive us when we sin and help us to learn Your words by looking in the Bible. Help us to take the time to devote and dedicate our lives to You, as the prophets did, eager to share Your word with others, for You are worthy, good, awesome and loving towards us. Give us wisdom Lord so we can serve others and You, even now at our young age. Pray for those who could not be here today, and pray for those here who have special issues in their life. Be with them, guide, comfort, and bless them. In Jesus' name, amen.