

# THE FORGOTTEN PROPHETS

Lessons in Faithfulness from  
the Overlooked Figures of Scripture



# ABEL: THE FIRST MARTYR

*Genesis 4:1-10; Hebrews 11:4; Matthew 23:35*

## 1

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### *The Silent Offering*

A little-known piece of trivia: Abel never speaks a word in the biblical record. His life, brief as it was, is summarized in only a few verses. And yet Jesus, thousands of years later, refers to him as “righteous Abel” (Matt. 23:35), and the writer of Hebrews says that “through his faith, though he died, he still speaks” (Heb. 11:4). How powerful a testimony that comes from a silent figure! This quiet shepherd becomes the prototype of the faithful sufferer—the one whose life and death witness and cry out to a God who sees, hears, and remembers.

Genesis 4 contrasts Abel and his brother Cain, not primarily in personality or work, but in *worship*. Abel offers to God “the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions” (Gen. 4:4), while Cain brings “an offering of the fruit of the ground” (Gen. 4:3). We are told that God regards Abel’s offering, but not Cain’s. Why? Are they not both doing what God commanded? Well, the text in Genesis hints that

Abel's gift reflects the heart of faith—a costly, wholehearted offering given in reverence to God. In other words, there is a particular disposition in Abel that is lacking in Cain. Thankfully, the Bible does not leave us with hints forever. The author of Hebrews makes it explicit: “By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain” (Heb. 11:4).

Abel's *faith* made his offering acceptable—not his skill, his position, the content of his offering, or his eloquence—it was his faith. In that regard, Abel stands as an example for all who live humbly before God, away from the spotlight, but with hearts full of trust and devotion.

### *Cain's Anger and God's Warning*

While Abel's offering was pleasing to the Lord, Cain's was not. However, YHWH's response to Cain's rejected offering is a merciful and gentle correction. “Why are you angry?” God asks. “And why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted?” (Gen. 4:6-7). God knows what Cain has yet to fully grasp: his heart was unraveling with bitterness and so God warns him, “Sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it (Gen 4:7).”

This moment deepens the contrast between the brothers—not just in their worship, but in their response to God's voice. Abel listens by faith while Cain resists by pride. Cain's failure is not just a poor offering; it is the refusal to repent, a heart that hardens instead of softens to God's

voice. The juxtaposition set before the reader is clear: Abel's faith is a quiet surrender, while Cain's rebellion is a loud festering wound.

And here we find a difficult theological truth: faithfulness does not prevent suffering, and unfaithfulness often masquerades as religious activity. Cain was a "worshiper" too—but not a faithful one. His offering had form *without* substance.

### *The Cost of Faithfulness*

The narrative continues: Cain invites Abel out into the field, and the brevity of the verse is jarring: "And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him" (Gen. 4:8). No further detail is given—no argument, no struggle. Just blood on the ground. The first human death is not a natural one; it is a murder. And the first to die is the righteous one.

This is a sobering introduction to a recurring biblical pattern: the faithful are not spared pain; they often bear the brunt of the world's hostility. Jesus draws a direct line from Abel to the long line of prophets who were killed for speaking the truth and living faithfully (Matt. 23:35). Abel, though silent, testifies to faithfulness—a martyr in the truest sense.

## *Martyrdom and the Prophetic Pattern*

The word martyr means “witness,” but the specific kind of witness that leads to persecution and death. Abel bears witness to God, not through proclamation, but through faith and sacrifice. His life was his testimony—and his death sealed it. His blood becomes the biblical prototype of all righteous blood that calls out for justice.

But the world is one of injustice. As Adam ate the fruit, justice was put on hold. As such, Abel’s death introduces a theme that pulses through the rest of Scripture: those who bear God’s image most faithfully often bear the world’s wrath most severely. From Joseph in Egypt, to Elijah before Ahab, to Jeremiah in a cistern, to John the Baptist in Herod’s dungeon—the faithful are opposed, not because they are wrong, *but because they are right*.

The New Testament writers saw this clearly. Jesus warned his disciples: “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18). Paul reminds Timothy that “all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim. 3:12). Faithfulness invites suffering—not as a punishment, but as a form of identification with Christ. To be faithful means to take up our cross and follow Christ.

## *God Sees and Responds*

After Abel's murder, God calls to Cain: "Where is Abel your brother?" Cain's cynical reply—"Am I my brother's keeper?"—is met with divine justice: "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground" (Gen. 4:10). The reader would be wise to pause here—is this simply flowery narrative to move the story along? A thoughtful consideration would suggest not. No, this is not just poetic language—*it is theological truth*. God hears the cries of the innocent. He sees what the world ignores. To use a familiar idiom from our day: God knows when the tree falls in the forrest. Abel's death is not anonymous. Though he speaks not, his blood speaks volumes. And God answers.

There is great comfort here for the forgotten and afflicted. Nothing done in faith is lost. No faithful sacrifice is wasted. God keeps record not only of deeds but of sorrows. "You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?" (Ps. 56:8). Abel's story assures us in a world of injustice and suffering: *God remembers*.

## *A Modern Echo: A Faithful Unknown*

In 1956, five missionaries were killed in Ecuador by the very tribe they were trying to reach with the gospel. Among them was Jim Elliot, whose journal famously read, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot

lose." Yet behind the well-known story of the Elliots and those who accompanied him in his missionary efforts there were others—pilots, wives, supply workers—who lived and died in obscurity, laboring in faith for a harvest they never saw. In every generation, the church is carried forward by countless believers like Abel: unnamed, uncelebrated, and often unthanked. Their prayers, tears, and acts of obedience are known fully only to God. But like Abel, "they still speak."

### *Still Speaking?*

What does Abel say to us today? His life reminds us that God measures success differently than we do. Abel is not remembered for great deeds or powerful words, but for a sincere heart that worshipped God rightly. His offering was acceptable because it was given in faith. His death was unjust, but not unnoticed.

In a world that often rewards visibility and ambition, celebrity pastors and televangelists, Abel calls us to quiet, steadfast devotion. Many believers serve in obscurity—raising children, leading small congregations, writing unseen prayers, caring for others with no recognition. Abel's story assures us that God sees such faith, and honors it.

Even more, Abel's blood—though it speaks—does not have the final word. Hebrews 12:24 tells us that the blood of Jesus "speaks a better word than the blood of Abel." Abel's blood cries out for justice; Jesus' blood cries out for

mercy. The forgotten martyr points forward to the crucified Savior.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. What does Abel's story teach us about the nature of true worship?
2. Why do you think God commended Abel's offering over Cain's?
3. How does Abel's life challenge the way we think about success and recognition in the church today?
4. In what ways might we hear Abel "still speaking" to the modern believer?
5. How does Jesus' blood "speak a better word" than Abel's, and what comfort does that bring?
6. Who in your life has modeled Abel-like faithfulness in obscurity?

### *Reflection*

Have I equated faithfulness with visibility or success?

What might it look like for me to quietly offer my best to God, even if no one notices?



## *Prayer*

Lord, make me faithful like Abel. Help me offer my life to you in simple trust. Though the world may overlook me, let my life be pleasing in your sight. And when I suffer for righteousness' sake, may I remember the blood of Jesus—give me courage to endure, knowing you see, remember, and redeem.

## *Further Reading*

- Hebrews 11:1-7 - The "Hall of Faith" introduction and Abel's commendation.
- Genesis 4:1-16 - The full account of Cain and Abel.
- Hebrews 12:18-24 - Jesus' mediating blood contrasted with Abel's.
- Psalm 56 - God's care for the tears of the faithful.
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* - On hidden faithfulness in Christian community.
- Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* - On perseverance and unnoticed discipleship.

# SHEMAIAH: THE PROPHET WHO PREVENTED A CIVIL WAR

*1 Kings 12:21-24; 2 Chronicles 11:1-4*

## 2

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### *A Kingdom Divided, a Nation on the Brink*

The death of Solomon shattered Israel's fragile unity. His son Rehoboam succeeded him, but instead of easing the burdens Solomon had imposed, he doubled down. The result was rebellion. Ten tribes broke away and crowned Jeroboam king over the north, leaving Rehoboam with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin in the south. The kingdom of David was now fractured. Political division threatened to become civil war.

Rehoboam, humiliated and angry, responded how kings often do: he prepared for battle. He mustered 180,000 warriors to bring the kingdom back by force. From his perspective, it made sense. This was treason. These tribes were breaking covenant and turning away from Jerusalem and its temple. Rehoboam wasn't just defending his throne—he believed he was defending God's purposes. As such, the slighted king decided that it was time to

march. Until a little-known prophet named Shemaiah intervened.

### *The Prophet Who Said “Don’t Go”*

The text doesn’t tell us where Shemaiah came from or how long he’d been a prophet. He steps into the story for only a few verses, but his message stops an entire war in its tracks:

*“Thus says the Lord, You shall not go up or fight against your relatives the people of Israel. Every man return to his home, for this thing is from me.”  
(1 Kings 12:24)*

It’s a short oracle, but it’s stunning. Don’t fight. Don’t resist. Don’t try to fix this. This thing is from the Lord.

Shemaiah reveals what no one else can see: the division of the kingdom isn’t just the result of political miscalculation—it is *divine judgment*. God had told Solomon this would happen because of his idolatry (1 Kings 11:11–13). What looked like chaos was actually part of God’s plan. This wasn’t a time to fight; it was a time to submit.

### *Courage to Restrain Power*

It takes courage to wage war—but perhaps even more to prevent one. Shemaiah is sent into a room full of generals and warriors, swords sharpened and ready. Their king has

given the command. The cause feels righteous, but Shemaiah says, “No.”

It takes tremendous faith to say, “Stand down,” when the adrenaline says “Charge.” It takes conviction to believe that restraint can be obedience. But wisdom doesn’t just ignite passion—it tempers it.

Not every cause that *feels* right is blessed. Not every impulse that *feels* holy is holy. God’s people need voices like Shemaiah’s—voices that slow us down, bring us back to the Word, and ask: *Is this truly from the Lord?*

### *Obedience That Feels Like Loss*

The remarkable part? Rehoboam listened:

*“So they listened to the word of the Lord and went home again, according to the word of the Lord.” (2 Chron. 11:4)*

No war. No bloodshed. No reclaiming of the north. Just obedience. That might seem like a small thing. But for a king—especially one defending his inheritance—it’s monumental.

Sometimes obeying God looks like accepting loss. Sometimes it means letting go of what feels rightfully ours. Rehoboam could have justified his cause a hundred different ways. But in this moment, he did what few kings do: he obeyed a word that made him look weak. He trusted that God’s plan was bigger than his throne.

## *When God Says, “This Thing Is From Me”*

Perhaps the most profound part of Shemaiah’s message is this line: “This thing is from me.” It’s a phrase we don’t always want to hear. We want God to prevent division, not ordain it. We want Him to unify, not divide.

But Scripture shows that sometimes God tears down what we try to hold together. Sometimes He allows painful separation to purify His people. In this case, the division of Israel was a consequence of Solomon’s compromise. To fight it would have been to resist God.

Shemaiah teaches us to look for God’s hand not just in victories and reunions—but in the fractures we never wanted. To ask the questions: *What if this pain is not a mistake? What if God is using this for a deeper purpose?*

## *The Prophet of Restraint*

Shemaiah shows us a different kind of prophet—not one who calls fire from heaven or speaks judgment, but one who says “Stop.” He’s a prophet of restraint. Of peace. Of trusting God’s sovereignty over human agendas.

In our own world, where activism is often louder than reflection and zeal is often mistaken for faithfulness, we need voices like Shemaiah’s. Voices that can say:

- Wait.
- Listen.
- This might not be your battle.
- This may be from the Lord.

## *Lessons From Shemaiah*

What can Shemaiah teach us? Even more than that, what can Rehoboam teach us?

1. *Discernment matters.* Just because something looks wrong doesn't mean we are called to fix it.
2. *Obedience isn't always victorious.* Sometimes it means walking away.
3. *Division doesn't always mean defeat.* God may be working through it.

## *Discussion Questions*

1. Why was Rehoboam's desire to go to war understandable—and why was it wrong?
2. What does Shemaiah's message teach us about God's sovereignty in hard situations?
3. Why is it hard to obey God when it feels like defeat?
4. Where might we need restraint in our churches or communities today?
5. How do we discern when "this thing is from the Lord"?

## *Reflection*

Have I ever tried to "fight for God" when He was calling me to wait or trust? Am I willing to obey even when it feels like surrender?

## *Prayer*

Father, give me ears to hear Your voice, even when it tells me to slow down. Help me to trust Your purposes in seasons of loss or confusion. Make me willing to obey—not just when the path leads to victory, but when it leads to peace—even if it makes me appear weak. Let me be a voice of wisdom and restraint in a world of noise and haste.

## *Further Reading*

- 1 Kings 11-12 – Background to the divided kingdom
- Proverbs 19:21 – “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.”
- James 1:19-20 – “Be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger...”
- Isaiah 55:8-9 – “My thoughts are not your thoughts...”
- Francis Schaeffer, *True Spirituality* – On surrendering the right to control outcomes.
- Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* – For reflections on faithfulness over impulse.

# JEHU: THE PROPHET WHO REBUKED A COMPROMISED KING

*1 Kings 12:1-7; 2 Chronicles 19:1-3, 20:34-37*

## 3

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### *Prophets and Kings: An Uneasy Dance*

The relationship between prophets and kings is never simple. Kings have power, but prophets have authority. Kings can command armies; prophets answer only to God. When a king is faithful, prophets are honored. But when a king strays, the prophet becomes an unwanted voice—a divine interruption.

Jehu the son of Hanani was that kind of prophet. Like his father, who rebuked King Asa, Jehu was not afraid to confront royalty. In fact, he was sent to multiple kings—and in each case, his message was sharp, disruptive, and absolutely necessary.

Jehu teaches us that God's concern is not whether we start well or achieve results, but whether we obey fully. Half-hearted obedience, political compromise, and selective faithfulness are still disobedience in God's eyes.



## *Words of Judgment to a Corrupt Dynasty*

Jehu first appears in 1 Kings 16, during the reign of Baasha, king of Israel. Baasha had taken the throne through violence and had the opportunity to lead the nation back to covenant faithfulness. Instead, he walked in the sins of Jeroboam, maintaining the false worship centers in Bethel and Dan. Then comes the word of the Lord through Jehu:

*"I exalted you out of the dust and made you leader over my people Israel, but you have walked in the way of Jeroboam and made my people Israel to sin... I will utterly sweep away Baasha and his house..." (1 Kings 16:2-3)*

It is a chilling reminder that being *used* by God is not the same as being *approved* by God. Baasha was given a chance and squandered it. In light of this, Jehu's message is clear: divine calling does not excuse disobedience. Position is no substitute for purity—a mistake common to kings (just ask Uriah the Hittite).

## *Confronting Jehoshaphat: The Peril of Alliance*

Years later, Jehu appears again—this time in Judah. King Jehoshaphat had just returned from a military campaign alongside Ahab, king of Israel. Though Jehoshaphat was a godly king, his alliance with Ahab was a grave mistake. Ahab was a wicked ruler, and their partnership blurred the

lines of covenant faithfulness. When Jehoshaphat returns, Jehu meets him with a bold question:

*“Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Because of this, wrath has gone out against you from the Lord.” (2 Chron. 19:2)*

It’s a stunning indictment. Jehoshaphat hadn’t abandoned God—he’d just made peace with someone who had. He hadn’t built altars to Baal—but he had ridden into battle beside a man who did. This is the sin of *compromise*.

Jehu’s rebuke reminds us that cooperation with evil, even for seemingly good purposes, invites God’s judgment. Faithfulness requires not only doing the right thing, but doing it in the right company. As the first Psalm warns:

*“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.” (Ps. 1:1-2)*

### ***A Word of Grace—and a Warning***

But Jehu doesn’t stop with condemnation. He offers a rare prophetic balance—rebuke and affirmation:

*“Nevertheless, some good is found in you, for you destroyed the Asherahs out of the land and have set your heart to seek God.” (v. 3)*

This is vital. Jehoshaphat's story isn't all negative. He had made reforms. He had pursued God. His heart was, in many ways, loyal. Jehu doesn't erase that, but he also doesn't let it excuse the compromise.

Jehu teaches us the biblical art of clarity: affirm what is good, confront what is wrong, and call people to full obedience. In an age of flattery and defensiveness, the church needs voices like Jehu's—clear-eyed, God-fearing, honest.

### *A Final Warning: Trusting in Ships and Kings*

Jehu's final appearance comes near the end of Jehoshaphat's life. The king had entered another alliance—this time with Ahaziah, a wicked king of Israel—by building a fleet of ships for trade. To be fair, this time it was a business deal and not a war plan. But the compromise remained. Jehu delivers the YHWH's judgment:

*"Because you have joined with Ahaziah, the Lord will destroy what you have made." (2 Chron. 20:37)*

And the ships were wrecked—never reaching their destination.

This is a sobering reminder: even late in life, even in "neutral" areas like commerce or diplomacy, God still calls His people to purity. Faithfulness is not just about our worship—it touches our partnerships, our plans, and our trust. Jehoshaphat's fleet was broken not by storm or

sabotage—but by the Lord—because Jehoshaphat had yoked himself to evil.

### *Lessons in Courage and Spiritual Integrity*

Jehu's ministry spanned decades, multiple kings, and two kingdoms. His words were never popular, but always necessary. What can we learn from him?

1. *Faithfulness isn't partial.* God does not accept half-obedience.

2. *Alliance with the wicked is still compromise.* Our partnerships reflect our values.

3. *Correction is a mercy.* Jehu's words gave Jehoshaphat the chance to course-correct.

4. *Prophets don't flatter kings.* They fear God more than men.

5. *Even wise, godly people can fall into compromise.* We must remain vigilant to the end.

Jehu reminds us that obedience is not a moment—it's a lifetime. And God sends his servants not only to confront the clearly wicked, but also to warn the well-meaning when they veer off course.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. Why was Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab so dangerous, even though he remained personally faithful?

2. What does Jehu's ministry reveal about God's standards for leadership and integrity?
3. How can we discern when a partnership or alliance is spiritually compromising?
4. Why is it often harder to confront partial obedience than outright rebellion?
5. What lessons can we draw from the destruction of Jehoshaphat's ships?

### *Reflection*

Have I allowed compromise to sneak into my life through alliances or justifications?

Am I willing to receive correction from God's Word or God's people?

### *Prayer*

Lord, guard my heart from the slow drift of compromise. Give me discernment to recognize when I'm yoking myself to things or people who oppose You. And give me humility to receive correction when I need it. Make me faithful—not just outwardly, but all the way down.

### *Further Reading*

- 1 Kings 16; 2 Chronicles 18-20 – The full arc of Jehu's prophetic ministry

- Psalm 1:1 - On the danger of walking in step with the wicked
- 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 - "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers..."
- John Owen, *The Mortification of Sin* - On rooting out partial obedience
- J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness* - On the seriousness of spiritual compromise.

# HANANI: THE PROPHET WHO CONFRONTED A KING

*2 Chronicles 16:1-10*

## 4

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### *A Conflict of Strategy and Faith*

King Asa of Judah had a long and mostly faithful reign. Early in his rule, he tore down idols, led reforms, and prayed desperately for God's help against a massive Ethiopian army—and won. But decades later, something changed.

In his thirty-sixth year, Asa faced another challenge. This time it was from Baasha, king of Israel (the northern kingdom), who fortified Ramah to cut off trade and movement in and out of Judah. Rather than pray or seek the Lord, Asa made a treaty with Ben-hadad, king of Syria. He took treasures from the temple and the palace and paid the pagan king to break his alliance with Israel and attack them—and it worked. The threat from Israel dissolved. Asa's tactic was clever—and effective. However, the tactic was not faithful.

## *The Courage to Say the Unwelcome Thing*

Enter Hanani the seer. A man of God whose name is barely known, and whose appearance in Scripture is limited to a single confrontation. He comes to Asa and says:

*"Because you relied on the king of Syria, and did not rely on the Lord your God, the army of the king of Syria has escaped you." (2 Chron. 16:7)*

In other words, Asa's political success came at spiritual cost. He won the moment—but lost the bigger purpose. He exchanged trust in God for a reliance on human power. Hanani then reminds Asa of his earlier faith:

*"Were not the Ethiopians and the Libyans a huge army... yet you relied on the Lord and he gave them into your hand?" (v. 8)*

It was a sharp rebuke, but as is often the case, it doubled as a call to repentance.

## *God's Eyes, Our Hearts*

Then comes one of the most powerful theological truths in the Old Testament—one that has comforted and challenged generations of believers:

*"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him." (v. 9)*



This is the heartbeat of biblical faith: not trusting in strength, strategy, or alliances, but in a God who actively seeks to uphold the one whose heart is His. Asa's failure wasn't political miscalculation—it was spiritual mistrust. Hanani speaks with prophetic clarity: *God is looking for trust, not tactics*. Asa had known this once, but power and years had dulled his dependency.

### *The Price of Prophetic Honesty*

How does Asa respond? Not with repentance. Not with humility. Not even with debate.

*"Then Asa was angry with the seer and put him in the stocks in prison, for he was in a rage with him because of this." (v. 10)*

Hanani is silenced: the messenger becomes the target. As the pattern shows, this is often the cost of prophetic ministry—especially when speaking truth to powerful men. Prophets are rarely loved in the moment. Their words pierce. Their warnings disrupt. Hanani was not praised for his courage. He was imprisoned for it.

### *When Faith Becomes Formality*

Asa's life continued after this moment, but something had shifted. Later, he developed a severe disease in his feet. And again, the chronicler makes a pointed observation:

*"Yet even in his disease he did not seek the Lord,  
but sought help from physicians." (v. 12)*

This isn't a condemnation of doctors—it's a diagnosis of Asa's heart. The man who once leaned wholly on God had become someone who defaulted to human strength. The pattern of spiritual independence, once set, became habitual.

### *The Ministry of Confrontation*

Hanani's story reminds us of an often-overlooked dimension of spiritual leadership: the ministry of confrontation. True love warns. True faith speaks. True prophets are willing to confront kings—not for personal gain, but because they are zealous for God's name and their neighbor's soul.

Confrontation, in our age, is often seen as judgmental or harsh. But biblically, it's often the purest form of care. To challenge a friend, a leader, a church—when their path veers from God—is an act of courage and love. We need Hananis in the church: people who will speak not what is safe, but what is needed.

### *Trusting God in Strategic Times*

Asa's failure was not in his leadership skill, but in his spiritual posture. He leaned on strategy rather than prayer. He traded God's help for Syria's. If we are honest with

ourselves, we are often tempted in a similar way. When resources are thin, when opposition rises, when numbers dwindle—our instinct is to find the fastest fix. Call in allies. Cut corners. Borrow from the world’s playbook.

But the eyes of the Lord still search for the one whose heart is blameless toward Him. That is who God supports.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. Why did Asa choose to rely on Syria rather than God, and how do we do the same today?
2. What does 2 Chronicles 16:9 teach us about God’s desire to support the faithful?
3. How should we respond when someone confronts us with truth?
4. What does Hanani’s courage teach us about speaking up in difficult contexts?
5. How can the church cultivate both bold truth-telling and humble listening?

### *Reflection*

Where am I tempted to rely on human strategies rather than God’s strength?

Have I hardened my heart toward a hard word someone has spoken to me?

## *Prayer*

Lord, when I face trouble, teach me to trust You first. Keep my heart soft toward correction. Give me the courage to speak when truth must be spoken, and the humility to hear when I am wrong. Let me be like Hanani—faithful, even when it costs.

## *Further Reading*

- 2 Chronicles 14-16 – The full account of Asa’s reign and Hanani’s rebuke.
- Psalm 20:7 – “Some trust in chariots... but we trust in the name of the Lord.”
- Proverbs 27:6 – “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.”
- Jeremiah 17:5-8 – A contrast between those who trust in man vs. God.
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* – On speaking truth in community.
- Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands* – On loving, honest confrontation.

# MICAIAH: THE PROPHET WHO WOULDN'T BACK DOWN

*1 Kings 22:1-28; 2 Chronicles 18*

## 5

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### *The Lone Voice in the Crowd*

The scene is tense. The kingdom is divided—no longer is there one kingdom of Israel, but two: Samaria, the northern kingdom called Israel, and the southern kingdom called Judah. The two respective kings sit in royal robes at the gates of Samaria. Four hundred prophets surround them, declaring upcoming victory in God's name. But Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, senses something is off. He asks, "Is there not another prophet of the Lord of whom we may inquire?" (1 Kings 22:7) Ahab, king of Israel, replies with disdain:

*"There is yet one man... Micaiah the son of Imlah, but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me, but evil" (v. 8).*

It is a line both humorous and tragic. Micaiah was not invited to the prophetic spectacle—faithful prophets rarely received invites to the king's parties. But more relevant, Micaiah was known for speaking uncomfortable truths. As

is often the case, Ahab preferred agreeable liars to honest prophets. But truth still had to be reckoned with. So they send for Micaiah.

### *A Prophet Under Pressure*

As Micaiah is brought in, a messenger warns him:

*"Behold, the words of the prophets with one accord are favorable to the king. Let your word be like theirs" (v. 13).*

The pressure is clear: get in line. Go with the crowd and say what the king wants to hear. But Micaiah replies with one of the most courageous statements in the Old Testament:

*"As the Lord lives, what the Lord says to me, that I will speak" (v. 14).*

And here we find the heart of prophetic integrity. Micaiah is outnumbered 400 to 1. He is standing before powerful kings. The cultural tide is against him. But he is unmoved. He does not weigh his words by popular opinion. He speaks only what the Lord says.

### *Exposing the Lie*

At first, Micaiah appears to play along. When asked whether Ahab should go to battle, he says with ironic sarcasm: "Go up and triumph" (v. 15). It's clearly not sincere

–perhaps mocking the hollow echoes of the false prophets. Ahab immediately catches the tone:

*“How many times shall I make you swear that you speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?” (v. 16)*

Thus, Micaiah obliges and reveals a vision from God: Israel will be scattered like sheep without a shepherd and Ahab will die in battle. Even more provocatively, Micaiah reveals that a lying spirit had gone out to deceive the prophets. Their message wasn’t from God—it was permitted by God to bring judgment. The truth Micaiah shares is shocking—but it is truth, nonetheless.

### *Punished for Telling the Truth*

Zedekiah, one of the false prophets, strikes Micaiah on the cheek and mocks him. Ahab orders Micaiah thrown into prison, with minimal rations, until he returns safely from war. But Micaiah’s final words are haunting: “If you return in peace, the Lord has not spoken by me” (v. 28). He knows he is right. Ahab will not return and Micaiah is willing to suffer for the truth.

Micaiah is not protected like Jeremiah. He is not honored like Elijah. He is mocked, imprisoned, and ignored. But his words come true. Ahab dies in battle and Israel is scattered. Micaiah’s faithfulness is vindicated—not by applause—prophets of doom are rarely honored by the doomed for “getting it right.” However, Human applause or not, Micaiah is validated by God’s unfolding providence.

## *The Seduction of the Majority*

Micaiah's story is a stark warning against *mistaking consensus for truth*. Four hundred prophets proclaimed upcoming victory but only one told the truth—the crowd was wrong. This is a critical lesson for every age, especially in the church. Numbers do not guarantee truth. Popular opinion is no substitute for divine revelation. Church history is filled with moments when the majority was in error—on doctrine, justice, mission, or ethics—and a few lonely voices held the line.

In the age of social media, polling, and platforming, we are especially prone to the illusion that truth is democratic. But the Word of God often contradicts the masses. Faithfulness may require standing alone.

## *Courage to Speak When It Costs You*

Micaiah's courage is not to be confused with bravado. He knows what his words will cost. This is the prophetic posture: not angry ranting, but quiet resolve. Not seeking to offend, but refusing to flatter. Micaiah was not trying to “be different”—he was trying to be faithful.

We need this kind of resolve today. Christian leaders are tempted to soften their message to keep the approval of their audience, their denomination, their friends, or their donors. But the measure of a minister is not how many like him—it is whether he speaks what God has said.



## *Micaiah and Jesus*

Micaiah's path foreshadows Christ's. Jesus stood before power and told the truth. He was struck in the face (John 18:22). He was accused of blasphemy. He was abandoned by the crowd. His words were dismissed. And He was condemned.

Like Micaiah, Jesus exposed false religion and revealed uncomfortable truths. He refused to back down. And like Micaiah, He suffered—but His words were fulfilled, His resurrection vindicated Him, and He is now exalted. Micaiah reminds us that when we speak God's truth, we walk the road Jesus walked.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. What pressures did Micaiah face when he stood before Ahab and the crowd?
2. Why do you think people are drawn to false messages, even when they are misleading?
3. How can the church discern the difference between true and false teaching today?
4. Have you ever been in a situation where you had to stand alone for what's right?
5. How does Micaiah's story point us to Jesus?

## *Reflection*

Am I more concerned with being accepted or being faithful?

Where am I tempted to water down truth to keep peace?

## *Prayer*

Lord, give me the heart of Micaiah. Teach me to value truth more than comfort, obedience more than popularity, and your voice more than the voices around me. Strengthen me to speak even when I stand alone.

## *Further Reading*

- 1 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 18 - The full account of Micaiah's confrontation.
- Jeremiah 23 - Warnings against false prophets who speak peace when there is no peace.
- Galatians 1:10 - Paul's words about seeking the approval of God rather than man.
- Matthew 7:13-14 - Jesus' teaching on the narrow way.
- J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness* - On Puritan courage and truth-telling in a corrupt culture.

# URIAH: THE SILENCED PROPHET

*Jeremiah 26:20-23*

## 6

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### *A Name Almost Lost*

Uriah is a name that you might recognize, but probably from an altogether different story. You likely know of Uriah the *Hittite*, the man that David killed so that he might hide his sin with Bathsheba. But this is a different Uriah, though his story is similarly tragic. This Uriah only appears in four verses. Uriah, son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim, prophesied in the days of King Jehoiakim. We are told he spoke “words against this city and against this land, in accordance with all the words of Jeremiah” (Jer. 26:20). But unlike Jeremiah, who was protected by sympathetic officials, Uriah was not so fortunate, and he fled in fear. He was pursued, captured, brought back, and executed. His body was cast into the common graveyard; no eulogy, no honor, just silence. We might be led to ask: why does the Bible even mention him? The answer continues to support this study’s recurring theme: God remembers the ones we forget.

## *A Parallel Story—With a Different Ending*

Jeremiah 26 tells the story of Jeremiah preaching boldly in the temple courts. His message—judgment is coming unless there is repentance—infuriates the religious leaders. They want him dead. But thanks to intervention from elders and officials (and the memory of Micah's earlier prophecies), Jeremiah is spared. While it may seem that this part of the story ends on a high note, Uriah appears and disappears in a chilling footnote:

*"There was another man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Uriah the son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim. He prophesied against this city and against this land in words like those of Jeremiah. And when King Jehoiakim, with all his warriors and all the officials, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death. But when Uriah heard of it, he was afraid and fled and escaped to Egypt. Then King Jehoiakim sent to Egypt certain men, Elnathan the son of Achbor and others with him, and they took Uriah from Egypt and brought him to King Jehoiakim, who struck him down with the sword and dumped his dead body into the burial place of the common people" (Jeremiah 26:20-23).*

Same message. Same time period. Different outcome. Uriah fled, was caught, and was killed by the king.

The biblical writer places these two stories side-by-side—Jeremiah lives; Uriah dies. The implication is clear:

faithfulness does not guarantee safety. One man is protected by providence; the other is taken. *But both are faithful.*

### *A Grave Without Honor*

Jehoiakim had Uriah killed and buried in the “burial place of the common people” (v. 23). This wasn’t just neglect—it was intentional disgrace. In ancient Israel, burial location was a statement. The kings and prophets were buried with honor while Uriah was buried anonymously. The world tried to erase him—but God saw him.

This is a powerful biblical theme: the forgotten are remembered by God. Those the world silences, God hears. Those whose names the world seeks to erase, God remembers.

### *Prophetic Suffering and the Call to Endure*

Uriah’s story links him to a long line of prophets who suffered for truth. Jesus said:

*“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you... For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matt. 5:11-12).*

Hebrews 11 speaks of those who “were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword... of whom the world was not worthy” (vv. 37-38). Uriah was one of them. He stood for truth in a corrupt time, and for this

faithfulness, his voice was silenced by the powers of his day. But his faith was not in vain.

We live in a culture where speaking God's truth—on justice, holiness, sexuality, or authority—often brings rejection; the temptation is to run or go silent. Uriah reminds us: even if you are not rescued, even if you are not remembered by men, you are honored by God.

### *Fear and Faithfulness*

Uriah's story also helps us understand the tension between fear and faithfulness. He was afraid—and understandably so. But his fear did not erase his prophetic role. God does not demand that His servants be fearless, but he does call them to be faithful. Even Jeremiah—so often bold in his declarations—cried out in fear, loneliness, and pain (Jer. 20). Elijah ran and wished to die (1 Kgs. 19). Paul asked for prayers for courage (Eph. 6:19). Jesus Himself wept and trembled in Gethsemane.

Uriah's fear makes his faith all the more real. He did not stand because he was naturally brave. He stood because God had called him—and that call burned even when he wanted to flee.

### *God Keeps the Record*

Though buried in a grave of the common people, Uriah's name is inscribed in the eternal Word. The king who killed him is remembered for his wickedness while Uriah is

remembered for his witness. This is the logic of the kingdom. Jesus said, “The last shall be first.” He told His disciples that losing one’s life for His sake is how true life is found. He said that even the death of a sparrow does not go unnoticed by the Father—the forgotten faithful one is not forgotten by God.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. Why do you think Uriah’s story is placed alongside Jeremiah’s in Jeremiah 26?
2. What lessons can we learn from Uriah about fear, courage, and the cost of truth?
3. How should the church support those who speak hard truths today?
4. In what ways might you be called to speak, even when you feel like running?
5. What does it mean that God records and honors even the forgotten faithful?

### *Reflection*

Where do I feel afraid to speak the truth God has given me?

What encouragement does Uriah’s story give me to remain faithful, even when afraid?

## *Prayer*

Lord, you know my fears. You know the cost of truth.  
Give me courage to speak what you give, to stand when it's  
hard, and to trust you even if the world does not honor me.  
Let my faithfulness be known to you, and that be enough.

## *Further Reading*

- Jeremiah 26 – The full account of Jeremiah and Uriah.
- 2 Kings 23–24 – Context of Jehoiakim's reign and its spiritual decline.
- Matthew 5:10–12 – Jesus' blessing of the persecuted.
- Hebrews 11:32–40 – The cost of faith for many unnamed saints.
- 1 Kings 19 – Elijah's fear and God's gentle response.
- Os Guinness, *Prophetic Untimeliness* – On speaking truth when the world isn't ready.



# BARUCH: THE WEARY SCRIBE

*Jeremiah 36:43-45*

## 7

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### *A Scribe in the Shadows*

Baruch, the son of Neriah, lived in one of the darkest seasons of Judah's history. As Jerusalem stood on the brink of collapse, surrounded by foreign powers and torn apart by internal rebellion, Baruch stood beside the prophet Jeremiah—not as a co-prophet—but as a faithful scribe. His name appears only briefly in Scripture, yet the depth of his role and the intimacy of his struggle reveal a prophet-like figure shaped by service, sorrow, and sacred perseverance.

We meet Baruch in Jeremiah 36, where he is commissioned to write down Jeremiah's prophetic words. The task is not small. He records the judgments of God, the warnings of exile, and the pleas for repentance. And when Jeremiah is barred from entering the temple, it is Baruch who goes in his place, reading the scroll aloud to the people. Baruch's role was essential—but not glamorous. He copied, carried, and read the scroll. Baruch may never have heard the idiom "don't shoot the messenger," but he lived with the threat of that action daily: he was indeed the messenger. For this, he lived in danger, was hunted by kings, and endured scorn. Yet through it all, he remained.

## *The Weight of Faithful Ministry*

Ministry can feel heavy and it was no different for the scribe of Jeremiah. In Jeremiah 45, we find one of the most personal and intimate passages in the prophetic literature—a message not for a nation, but for a man. Baruch is weary. He laments, “Woe to me! The Lord has added sorrow to my pain; I am worn out with groaning and find no rest.” This is the cry of a soul stretched thin. He is not rebelling and he is not abandoning the mission. *He is just tired.* And God sees him.

God responds, not with condemnation of his weariness, but with proper perspective. “Do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them.” In other words, Baruch is reminded that his significance does not lie in the success or recognition of his ministry. His greatness is not the point—God’s purposes are. Yet God mercifully promises him his life “as a prize of war”—a quiet assurance in the midst of chaos. This moment is tender. God doesn’t shame Baruch for his exhaustion, but he does speak honestly, firmly, and with care. The weary scribe is seen, heard, and held in God’s hand.

## *The Ministry of Bearing Witness*

Baruch’s calling was to bear witness. He didn’t originate the word of the Lord, but he carried it faithfully. He became the pen, the mouthpiece, the courier of divine truth. His

ministry is a testimony to the sacredness of support roles in God's kingdom. Without Baruch, we might not have the book of Jeremiah. Without his long hours, his silent loyalty, and his repeated risk-taking, much of the prophetic legacy would be lost. His work was not flashy, but it was foundational to God's purposes.

Too often, we separate "ministry" into visible and invisible roles—elevating the former and minimizing the latter. Baruch breaks that dichotomy. His "behind-the-scenes" service was integral to God's unfolding plan. He teaches us that every faithful role in the body matters.

### *Lessons From Baruch*

Baruch teaches us that God sees the weary. He understands the burden of those who labor long without recognition. He knows what it costs to stay faithful in the shadows. He also teaches us that glory in the kingdom is not measured by greatness, but by faithfulness. Perhaps Baruch wanted more—to be known, to be secure, to make an impact. *Although God did not grant him ease, but He did grant him purpose.* Finally, Baruch shows us that ministry often includes lament, and that is okay. God does not rebuke honest sorrow: He meets it with truth.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. Why do you think Baruch's story is preserved in Scripture despite his small role?

2. What does his relationship with Jeremiah teach us about spiritual friendship and partnership?
3. How can we better value the “behind-the-scenes” work in the church?
4. How does God respond to Baruch’s lament, and what does that teach us about divine compassion?
5. In what ways do you identify with Baruch’s weariness or quiet faithfulness?

### *Reflection*

How can we be sure that we are bringing forth God’s word to those who need, not for our own glory, but for His? How does Baruch teach us humility, but perseverance in necessity?

### *Prayer*

Lord, when ministry feels heavy, remind me that you see and care. Teach me to serve faithfully, even when my role is hidden. Help me find rest in your promises when I grow weary.

### *Further Reading*

- Jeremiah 36; 43-45
- Lamentations 3:19-26
- 1 Corinthians 12:14-26

- *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* by Eugene Peterson
- *John G. Paton: An Autobiography* by James Paton.

# ZECHARIAH: THE FORGOTTEN PRIEST

*2 Chronicles 24:17-22; Matthew 23:35; Luke 11:51*

## 8

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### *The Tragedy of a Forgotten Reformer*

Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, is one of Scripture's most tragic and overlooked martyrs. His story, buried near the end of 2 Chronicles, may never have registered in our minds if Jesus Himself hadn't recalled it. In Matthew 23:35, Jesus speaks judgment on the religious elite, saying:

*"So that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar."*

"From Abel to Zechariah"—the first and last martyrs in the Hebrew Bible's canonical order. Abel died in a field at the hands of a jealous brother. Zechariah died in the temple at the hands of a corrupt religious establishment. Abel represents faithfulness in obscurity; Zechariah

represents courage in leadership and the danger of confronting injustice—even among God’s people.

### *A Legacy of Courage*

Zechariah’s father, Jehoiada, was a godly priest who courageously helped place Joash on the throne and bring reform to Judah (2 Chr. 23). Under Jehoiada’s influence, Joash led the nation back to covenant faithfulness. But when Jehoiada died, something changed. Joash quickly fell under the sway of wicked advisors. The people abandoned the house of YHWH and returned to idolatry. God sent prophets to call them back—but they would not listen (2 Chr. 24:19). And then came Zechariah.

Zechariah stood in the prophetic tradition of his father. He boldly confronted the king and the people, saying,

*“Thus says God, ‘Why do you break the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, he has also forsaken you.’” (2 Chr. 24:20)*

It was a faithful word—but it would cost him everything.

### *A Death in the Sanctuary*

By reporting the words of the Lord, Zechariah earned the wrath of the king. We are told that he was stoned to death “by command of the king in the court of the house of the Lord” (v. 21). Did you notice the mention of the physical

location of this event? *In the court of the house of Yahweh*—those are chilling words to consider. His murder took place in the very space where truth was meant to be preserved and upheld. The sanctuary became a site of betrayal; the altar was stained with innocent blood.

There is a brutal irony here. The temple, which once rang with the songs of David and the prayers of the righteous, became the setting for a cold-blooded execution. The people who should have upheld justice silenced the voice of God.

This scene is not just a historical tragedy—it is a theological indictment. When the people of God reject truth-tellers, they are not simply resisting human counsel; they are rejecting the God who sent them.

### *Zechariah's Cry and Jesus' Echo*

As Zechariah lay dying, he cried out, “May the Lord see and avenge!” (v. 22) It is a cry for vindication—a plea that his murder would not be ignored—but it is also a cry for judgment on those who claim to worship Yahweh yet slay his messengers. And remarkably, that cry echoes centuries later from the lips of Jesus, who references Zechariah in His final prophetic rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees:

*“You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute*



*from town to town, so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation" (Matthew 23:33-36).*

*"Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,' so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation" (Luke 11:49-51).*

In these passages, Jesus places Zechariah's death at the far end of a long list of prophetic bloodshed, from Abel onward. He is saying: "This has always been the way. You kill the messengers God sends you. And now you will kill the Son."

The mention of Zechariah is not incidental. His death in the sanctuary symbolizes the full collapse of Israel's religious integrity. When the temple kills the prophet, the system is spiritually bankrupt.

## *When the Church Rejects the Word*

Zechariah's story is not only a warning to ancient Israel; it is a prophetic mirror held up to the church. There is a special tragedy when God's people reject God's Word, when leaders silence inconvenient voices, or when those in power use sacred institutions to protect themselves rather than honor truth.

Faithful pastors, teachers, and reformers across redemptive history have suffered under the weight of institutional resistance. Jan Hus was burned at the stake by church authorities. Martin Luther was excommunicated. More quietly, countless pastors have been driven from pulpits for speaking hard truths, calling people to repentance, or challenging cultural idols.

Zechariah reminds us that the greatest threat to truth may not come from the outside *but from within*—from hearts that prefer comfort to conviction, and leadership that fears truth more than error. To paraphrase the words of Jesus, "A prophet is without honor only in his hometown" (Mark 6:4).

## *The Forgotten Prophets Today*

Zechariah's story also speaks to anyone who has stood up for truth and paid for it. Have you lost a ministry position because you refused to compromise? Have you been maligned for holding to biblical convictions? Have you

been relegated to a theological oddity because of your firm grasp upon God's word? You are not alone.

Many modern believers are what we might call "quiet Zechariahs"—faithful in small churches, seminaries, and conversations—bearing witness to the truth, knowing it may cost them. The temptation to soften the word for the sake of avoiding confrontation, is real. But peace does not overrule truth. Zechariah reminds us: better to fall in the court of the Lord than to stand approved in the court of the wicked.

### *Abel and Zechariah Together*

It's no accident that Jesus names Abel and Zechariah together. Abel was killed by a brother; Zechariah was killed by God's people—his community of brothers. One died in a field; one in the temple. Both bore witness to righteousness. Both suffered unjustly. Both were remembered by the Son of God.

Abel speaks of private devotion while Zechariah speaks of public courage. Abel reminds us that unseen faith matters and Zechariah reminds us that truth must be spoken, no matter the cost. Their voices join the great chorus of witnesses (Heb. 12:1), calling us to fix our eyes on Jesus—the one who spoke truth perfectly, was murdered unjustly, and whose blood speaks a better word.

## *Discussion Questions*

1. What made Zechariah's message so offensive to the people of Judah?
2. Why do you think Jesus specifically mentioned Zechariah in His judgment of the Pharisees?
3. Have you ever experienced rejection for speaking truth? How did you respond?
4. How can the church today guard against becoming like the religious system that killed Zechariah?
5. What encouragement does Zechariah's faithfulness give you in your own calling?

## *Reflection*

Where am I tempted to stay silent rather than speak truth?

Have I feared religious rejection more than I've feared dishonoring God?

## *Prayer*

Lord, give me the boldness of Zechariah. Let me speak truth in love, even when it is costly. Protect me from the fear of man. And when I am rejected for Your name's sake, remind me that I stand in a long line of faithful witnesses whom You remember and reward.

### *Further Reading*

- 2 Chronicles 24:1-22 – The full account of Joash, Jehoiada, and Zechariah.
- Matthew 23:29-39 – Jesus' lament over Jerusalem and indictment of the religious leaders.
- Luke 11:37-54 – Jesus' woes to the Pharisees and lawyers.
- Jeremiah 20 – The suffering of a prophet under religious opposition.
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* – On costly grace and prophetic courage.
- Francis Schaeffer, *The Great Evangelical Disaster* – On compromise and courage in modern evangelicalism.

# PSALMS: THE VOICE OF THE RIGHTEOUS SUFFERER

*Psalms 22, 69, 73*

## 9

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### *The Psalms as Prophetic Voice*

When we think of prophets, we usually picture men like Elijah, Isaiah, or Jeremiah—standing boldly, confronting kings, declaring “Thus says the Lord.” But there is another prophetic figure in Scripture, often overlooked in the discussion of prophecy: the Psalmist(s).

We think of the book of Psalms as a collection of poetry, personal devotion, or liturgy. And while that is true in many cases, it is so much more. It is also prophecy—not only in its messianic predictions, but in its entire posture. The psalmist speaks with a prophet’s voice—honest, holy, and often heartbroken. Unsurprisingly, the most common genre of psalm is the lament. And in this chapter, we turn to these forgotten prophets—the righteous sufferers whose prayers became the soundtrack of the faithful remnant.

## *Who is the Psalmist?*

David wrote many of the Psalms, but not all. Other contributors include Asaph, the sons of Korah, Heman, and anonymous voices from the exile and beyond. What they all share is this: they lived in a world that did not match God's promises. And so they cried out:

- "How long, O Lord?"
- "Why do the wicked prosper?"
- "Why are You so far from saving me?"

These are not weak questions. They are the questions of faith under pressure. And they are deeply prophetic—not because they predict the future, but because they expose the present in the light of God's holiness.

### *Psalm 22—The Forsaken Prophet*

Psalm 22 opens with one of the most haunting cries in all of Scripture: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" This is the voice of a man abandoned—mocked, surrounded by enemies, stripped of comfort. He is the righteous one, and yet God is silent. The Psalm then becomes strangely specific:

- "They have pierced my hands and feet."
- "They divide my garments among them."
- "All who see me mock me."

We recognize these lines, probably because they are echoed at the cross. But Jesus did not merely quote Psalm 22; *He fulfilled it*. He entered fully into the suffering of the

psalmist, becoming the ultimate Righteous Sufferer, rejected and crushed. But the Psalm doesn't end in despair. It moves from agony to hope: "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord." The prophet suffers—but he also sees redemption.

### *Psalm 69—Zeal, Reproach, and Bitter Drink*

Another prophetic lament comes in Psalm 69:

- "Zeal for Your house has consumed me."
- "The reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me."
- "They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink."

Again, these words are messianic—but they also reflect the real anguish of the faithful. The psalmist is hated for his devotion, mocked for his hope, and burdened by isolation.

This Psalm reveals another deep prophetic pattern: faithfulness often invites opposition. The world is not kind to those who love holiness. And the psalmist teaches us to grieve that—not with bitterness—but with bold, raw honesty before God.

### *Psalm 73—The Honest Confession*

Not all Psalms are cries of forsakenness. Some are confessions of envy and awakening. Psalm 73 is written by Asaph, a worship leader and prophet. He begins with a



complaint: "I was envious of the arrogant... For they have no pangs until death."

It's the age-old frustration: Why do the wicked thrive while the righteous suffer? But Asaph experiences a turning point: "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end." The prophetic moment comes not from rage, *but from reorientation*. When he sees from God's perspective, his heart changes:

*"Whom have I in heaven but You? ... My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Ps. 73:25-26)*

This is the voice of one who has wrestled with doubt and emerged with a deeper wonder that leads to worship.

### ***What Makes These Psalms Prophetic?***

Unlike classical prophecy, the Psalms rarely begin with "Thus says the Lord." But they speak truth all the same.

They are prophetic because:

- They tell the truth about the human condition.
- They give voice to the righteous remnant.
- They expose injustice and plead for God's intervention.
- They anticipate the Messiah—not just in details, but in form.

Jesus Himself embodied the Psalms. He prayed them. He quoted them. He fulfilled them. And He used them to teach others about His mission. In Luke 24, He says:

*"Everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." (Luke 24:44)*

In other words, the Psalms were a central part of God's prophetic story.

### *The Psalms and the Suffering Church*

For the church today, the Psalms remain prophetic. They continue to do what prophets always did:

- They confront our false comfort.
- They call us to worship in lament.
- They remind us that the faithful often suffer, but not in vain.

In times of persecution, depression, doubt, or delay, the Psalms give us permission to cry. To protest. To hope. They teach us that pain and faith are not enemies, rather, they are often companions on the faithful path.

### *Prophetic Pray-ers for Today*

The Psalms call the modern church to recover the voice of lament—not to wallow, but to witness. We are not always called to fix the world. *Sometimes we are called to weep over it.* And in that weeping, to be shaped more and more into the image of Christ, the Man of Sorrows. If the prophets are preachers of truth, then the psalmists are pray-ers of truth—crying out in the night for God to act, to speak, to come. And He will.

## *Discussion Questions*

1. Why are the Psalms often overlooked as prophetic literature?
2. How does Psalm 22 or 69 help us understand the sufferings of Christ?
3. What does it mean to “lament in faith”?
4. Have you ever found your own experience mirrored in the Psalms?
5. How can the church recover the role of lament in its worship and witness?

## *Reflection*

Do I allow myself to lament before God?

What psalms have shaped my understanding of suffering and hope?

## *Prayer*

Lord, teach me to pray like the psalmists. Give me honesty in sorrow, hope in despair, and faith in the dark. Let my prayers echo the voice of the righteous sufferers who trusted You even when they could not see the way. Shape me into a trusting, faithful, ambassador for you.

## *Further Reading*

- Psalms 22, 69, 73, 88 – Key prophetic laments.

- Luke 24:44-45 - Jesus teaches the Psalms as prophecy.
- Hebrews 5:7-8 - Jesus' suffering prayers
- N.T. Wright, *The Case for the Psalms* - Recovering the Psalms in Christian life.
- Walter Brueggemann, *Praying the Psalms* - Honest prayer and the prophetic imagination.
- Michael Card, *A Sacred Sorrow* - Reflections on lament as worship.

# ANNA: THE PROPHETESS OF WAITING

*Luke 2:36-38*

## 10

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### *A Quiet Flame in the Temple*

In the flurry of Luke's rich nativity narrative, where angels sing and shepherds rush, a quiet figure lingers in the shadows of the temple. Her name is Anna. She is not loud nor flashy. She does not speak much in the text, yet Luke calls her a prophetess. Her prophetic voice doesn't boom from mountaintops or bring kings to their knees. Instead, it emerges from decades of prayer and fasting, a whisper of truth shaped by faithfulness.

Luke 2:36-38 introduces her with careful detail. She is the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was married for only seven years before becoming a widow, and now, at eighty-four, she has never left the temple. She worships night and day. Anna's life is not measured in major events but in long years of quiet devotion.

## *The Spiritual Discipline of Waiting*

The world tells us that waiting is passive, useless, even wasteful. The world tells us that instant gratification is the best possible solution. But Scripture tells a different story. *Waiting, when joined with faith, becomes a powerful form of worship.* “Patience is a virtue.” This means the waiting isn’t a waste. It can and should be instructive for the Christian. As such, Anna is not to be viewed as idle, rather, *she is disciplined.* She prays and fasts with consistency, forming her life around the rhythms of the temple and the hope of God’s promises.

This kind of waiting forms a person. Anna becomes attuned to the movement of God because she has oriented her life toward His presence. She is not surprised by the arrival of the Messiah—she is ready for Him. Her waiting has made her receptive. Like Simeon before her, she recognizes Jesus not because of outward signs but because of inward sensitivity.

## *The Prophetic Moment*

When Mary and Joseph bring the infant Jesus into the temple, Anna is there. The Spirit moves her, just as He had moved Simeon. She sees the child and knows: This is the one. The redemption of Israel; the long-awaited hope.

Her response is twofold: she gives thanks to God and she speaks to others. This is the essence of prophetic witness. She rejoices in the presence of the Lord, and then

she tells. Luke tells us she "spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem." In other words, her audience is not the world at large, but the faithful remnant—those who, like her, have been waiting.

### *Faithfulness in Obscurity*

Anna never leaves the temple. She does not travel or lead a movement. She is not even given direct speech in the text. But her faithfulness is seen by God and remembered by Scripture. She embodies the truth that God sees what is hidden. She is an example of what it means to be "long-suffering." Her quiet obedience becomes a beacon for all who serve in obscurity.

This is an important corrective for modern ministry. We are conditioned to value visibility and instant results. But the kingdom often grows in unseen places. Anna's example teaches us that a life of prayer and faithfulness, even if unnoticed by men, is never unnoticed by God.

### *The Ministry of Encouragement*

Anna speaks to those "waiting for redemption." She tells the faithful, "It has come. He is here." Her message is not long, but it is timely. She becomes a voice of encouragement to the weary.

In this way, Anna functions as a bridge. She connects the longings of the Old Testament with the fulfillment found in Christ. She is an aged prophetess bearing witness

to the new creation. Before her very eyes, the old begins to give way to the new.

### *Waiting as Theology*

Anna teaches us that faithful ministry is not about volume or visibility. It is about alignment with God's will. Her decades of faithfulness culminate in one brief moment of testimony—but that moment is filled with meaning.

She also reminds us that waiting is not wasted. Those long years in the temple were not preparation for ministry—they were *her ministry*. Her very presence, her prayers, her tears, her fasts—they were all a part of God's unfolding work.

Finally, Anna teaches us that hope does not disappoint. She waited, and she saw. And then she *rejoiced*.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. What does Anna's life teach us about the spiritual value of waiting?
2. How might we reframe our understanding of ministry in light of Anna's quiet faithfulness?
3. What role does worship and prayer play in preparing us to recognize God's work in the world?
4. In what ways can we cultivate patience in our spiritual walk?



5. How can we encourage others who feel forgotten in their faithfulness?

### *Reflection*

Where has God told you to “wait”? Are there any unanswered prayers that you feel like giving up on? How can Anna inform you thoughts on issues like these?

### *Prayer*

Lord, help me to see the value in faithful waiting. Form my heart in stillness and prayer. Teach me to be faithful in the quiet places, trusting that you see what others may not. Like Anna, make me attentive to your Spirit so I may rejoice when your promises are fulfilled.

### *Further Reading*

- Luke 2:22-38
- Isaiah 40:28-31
- Psalm 27:13-14
- Thomas Boston, *The Crook in the Lot*—God’s sovereignty in affliction and delays.
- Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers*—God’s control over all things—even suffering.

# AGABUS: A NEW TESTAMENT PROPHET

*Acts 11:27-30; 21:10-14*

## 11

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### *A Prophet Among the Apostles*

Agabus appears in Acts like a sudden flash of lightning. This is partly because he is one of the few individuals in the New Testament specifically called a prophet. His presence serves as a reminder that the prophetic ministry did not cease with the Old Testament but was alive and active in the age of the Apostles.

His first appearance comes in Acts 11:27-30. During a gathering of prophets in Antioch, Agabus stands up and predicts a great trial that would sweep across the Roman world:

*Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders*

*by the hand of Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:27-30).*

His message is not vague or symbolic—it is concrete and practical. The church responds immediately, sending relief to the believers in Judea. Agabus' prophecy doesn't incite fear—unlike some self-proclaimed “prophets” today—it produces action, compassion, and unity.

### ***Prophecy and the Church***

Agabus shows us that prophecy in the New Testament was understood as imminent, Spirit-empowered and church-centered. He does not operate in isolation. His gift serves and edifies the body. His word is measured, specific, and consistent with the character of God.

In a time when many claim prophetic authority, Agabus reminds us of what true prophetic ministry looked like: it built up, edified the Body of Christ, warned faithfully, and pointed people to trust in God, not in personalities. It was not focused on secret Bible codes or numerology—it was simply about calling the church to faithful action.

### ***The Prophetic Sign-Act***

Agabus again appears in Acts 21:10-14. Paul is on his way to Jerusalem, and Agabus arrives with a clear and imminent message. He takes Paul's belt, binds his own hands and feet, and says, "The Holy Spirit says: In this way

the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and hand him over to the Gentiles" (Acts 21:11).

This prophetic action echoes the tradition of Old Testament sign-acts—think of Jeremiah's yoke or Ezekiel's enacted parables. In other words, Agabus embodies the message. He doesn't merely speak; he demonstrates.

Yet notice his restraint. He does not tell Paul what to do. He delivers the word and trusts the Spirit to lead. Paul is not swayed by fear but affirms his willingness to suffer for the name of Jesus. Agabus does not resist this. He speaks truthfully, and Paul responds faithfully.

### *Prophetic Ministry in the Spirit*

Agabus shows us that the prophetic voice remained vital in the early church. He was not an apostle, yet he held a respected role. His words were weighed and taken seriously. The early church needed prophetic clarity, and the Spirit provided it.

But Agabus' example also reminds us that prophetic ministry was not always about predicting the future—it is about aligning with the Spirit's direction. Agabus spoke with conviction, but he did not *manipulate*. His ministry reflects the humility of Christ.

### *A Word for Today*

In an age of noise and spiritual confusion, Agabus stands as a model of quiet authority. He listened, he

obeyed, and he spoke only what the Spirit revealed. His actions carried weight because he was grounded in relationship with God. Today, we need voices like Agabus—not to predict famines or foretell imprisonments—but to call the church to readiness, faithfulness, and unity. His life reminds us that the Spirit still leads and that the church must still listen.

### *Lessons from Agabus*

Agabus teaches us that, while the prophetic ministry may not continue today as in the Apostolic age, we can still learn from Agabus' willingness to speak the convictions the Lord placed upon his heart—even when it came to the Apostles. He also shows us that listening to God should lead to preparedness, not panic. God's word—as we have it in the Scriptures—produces wise, measured action. The church responds not with frenzy, but with faith. Finally, Agabus reminds us that the church is not merely a community of ideas, but a people led by the living voice of God.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. What distinguishes Agabus's prophetic ministry from other voices in the early church?
2. How did the early church benefit from Spirit-led, humble prophecy?
3. How should we discern and respond when others share their spiritual convictions?

4. Why is humility crucial when it comes to hearing, sharing, or rejecting ours or other's spiritual convictions?
5. How can we cultivate discernment in our church communities?

### *Reflection*

If the age of prophetic office ceased with the last of the Apostles, how do we hear God speak today?

### *Prayer*

Lord, give me ears to hear Your voice and a heart ready to obey. Teach me to speak truthfully and humbly, like Agabus, trusting the Spirit's timing. Help me to respond to your word with faith, not fear.

### *Further Reading*

- Acts 11:27-30; Acts 21:10-14
- 1 Corinthians 14:1-5
- Ephesians 4:11-13
- O. Palmer Robertson, *The Final Word: A Biblical Response to the Case for Tongues and Prophecy Today*—an accessible argument for cessationism.
- Les Lamphere (AGTV), *Cessationist* (movie)

# JESUS: THE FULFILLMENT OF ALL PROPHETS

*Hebrews 1:1-3; Luke 24:25-25, 44-46; John 1:14-18*

## 12

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### *The Long Line of Prophets Ends in One Person*

From Abel to Zechariah, God has used prophets as the a means to revealing his character and will. They preached, they wept, they warned, they pleaded. But they were all pointing forward. All of them were signposts. And then, one day, the Word became flesh. The prophet they were all waiting for finally stepped into time—not just with a message from God, but as God Himself. Jesus Christ is not merely another prophet in the line. He is the fulfillment of the prophetic office. All of the prophets of the apostolic age provide a rear-view mirror—looking back to the Great Prophet, Jesus—whose words are not just divine—they are divinity itself.

Think of Christ as the sunrise. The Old Testament prophets were lit torches, trying to explain to people living in perpetual darkness what the sun would look like when it rose. When Jesus arrives on the stage of history, it is as if

the sun finally rises, and the rays of His glory are the New Testament prophets—explaining and testifying to the blazing magnificence of the sun. But whether Old Testament or New—torch or ray—they find their source, identity and purpose in Christ. They exist to make that reality known.

### *Hebrews 1: The Final Word*

The opening of Hebrews makes this point clearly:

*“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son...”*  
(Hebrews 1:1-2).

This contrast is stunning:

- The past: many prophets, many times, many ways.
- The present: one Son, speaking the final Word.

Jesus doesn't merely continue the prophetic tradition. *He completed it.* And what qualifies Him to do so?

*“...whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature...”* (Heb. 1:2-3)

This is no ordinary messenger. This is THE Message made flesh.



## *Jesus as the Prophetic Fulfillment*

When Jesus walked the road to Emmaus with two confused disciples after His resurrection, He didn't just perform a miracle or offer encouragement. He gave them a Bible study:

*"Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24:27)*

Then He continued:

*"Everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." (Luke 24:44)*

Jesus saw the entire Old Testament as a unified testimony to Himself. Every prophet, every poem, every promise was a thread in the tapestry that would reveal the glory of the Messiah—unfortunately, even his own people would be blind to the tapestry's brilliance.

### *The Prophet Like Moses*

In Deuteronomy 18, Moses promised that God would raise up a prophet like him:

*"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth..." (Deut. 18:18).*

The Jewish people waited centuries for this figure. Some thought it might be John the Baptist. Others thought

perhaps Elijah would return. But in Acts 3:22, Peter proclaims that Jesus is the prophet like Moses. Why? Because:

- Like Moses, Jesus spoke face-to-face with God.
- Like Moses, Jesus led His people out of bondage—not from Egypt, but from sin and death.
- Like Moses, Jesus was rejected by His own.
- But unlike Moses, Jesus never failed.

He is the new and better Moses, speaking not from Mount Sinai but from a cross, where mercy and judgment meet.

### *Jesus Is the Message*

All the other prophets say, “Thus says the Lord.” Only Jesus says, “Truly, truly, I say to you.” He doesn’t just bring the Word. He is the Word. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...” (John 1:14) Every time He spoke, it was divine revelation. Every parable, every prayer, every warning, every whisper—it was God speaking directly. To see Jesus is to see the Father. To hear Jesus is to hear the truth unfiltered.

### *Prophet, Priest, and King*

The Reformed tradition identifies three great offices that Jesus fulfills:

- Prophet – He reveals God.
- Priest – He reconciles us to God.

- King – He rules with the authority of God.

In Jesus, all these offices converge. But the prophetic role is especially vital because without revelation, we wouldn't even know what salvation is. Jesus comes to declare, interpret, and embody the truth about God and man. He is the only one who perfectly reveals the Father—and who perfectly obeys Him.

### *The Rejected Prophet*

Even though Jesus was the perfect prophet, He was still rejected. He wept over Jerusalem:

*“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it...”*  
(Matt. 23:37)

He knew the history. He knew He would suffer the same fate. And yet, He came anyway. He wasn't just another prophet killed by the system—He was the final prophet killed to *end* the system. He was the Master's son, sent to bring the workers of the vineyard into order (Mark 12:1-12). His death wasn't just martyrdom—it was atonement.

### *The Prophetic Church*

Now, in the age of the New Covenant, the prophetic mission continues—not through new revelation—but through witness. The Church becomes the prophetic voice in the world:

- Declaring the gospel

- Calling people to repentance
- Holding up the mirror of truth
- Suffering for righteousness

We do not speak new words from God—but we proclaim the Word once delivered. And every time we do, we echo the voices of the forgotten prophets who came before us—now fulfilled in Christ.

### *The Word We Must Hear*

In a world filled with noise, we need clarity. And the clearest sound in all of history is this: “This is My beloved Son—listen to Him” (Luke 9:35). The Father has spoken. The prophets have pointed. The Son has come. We do not need to guess what God is like. We have seen His face in Jesus. We have his words in the Scriptures. As such, if we want to hear God’s voice, we turn to his revealed word.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. How is Jesus different from every prophet who came before Him?
2. What does it mean that Jesus is God’s “final Word” to us?
3. How do the three offices of Christ (prophet, priest, king) shape your understanding of His ministry?
4. In what ways is the church called to be prophetic today?

5. What might it look like to truly listen to Jesus in a noisy, distracted world?

### *Reflection*

Have I truly heard and received the words of Jesus as God's final Word?

Do I submit to Him not only as Savior but as Prophet—my teacher, revealer, and truth-teller?

### *Prayer*

Lord Jesus, You are the Word made flesh. You are the voice of God in a world of lies. Help me to know your word, to trust You, and obey You. Let me live as one shaped by the truths given in the Scriptures. And may my life bear witness to the light You have brought into the darkness.

### *Further Reading*

- Hebrews 1; John 1; Luke 24 – Jesus as the fulfillment of Scripture
- Deuteronomy 18; Acts 3 – The promised prophet like Moses
- Matthew 17:1–5 – Transfiguration and divine affirmation
- John Calvin, *Institutes, Book II, Ch. XV* – On Christ's threefold office

- Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. 3 – The prophetic work of Christ
- Michael Horton, *Pilgrim Theology* – A concise treatment of Christ as Prophet

# CONCLUSION: REMEMBERING THE FORGOTTEN

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*From A(Abel) to Z(Zechariah)*

The story of Scripture is not only the story of kings and warriors, of miracles and revivals. It is also the story of the faithful few—the obscure, the overlooked, the nameless ones who walked with God when no one else did. We’ve followed their trail:

- From the blood of Abel to the cry of Zechariah.
- From the homes of forgotten prophets to the courts of distant kings.
- From the quiet songs of the psalmist to the broken heart of Jeremiah.

And at every turn, one truth remains: God sees. God speaks. God remembers.

These forgotten prophets were not successful by the world’s standards. Many were ignored. Some were hated. Most were killed. Yet heaven bears their names. Eternity echoes with their faithfulness. They did not prophesy to build a platform or speak for applause. They simply obeyed. And in that, they point us to the One who fulfilled all prophecy. The One who not only spoke the truth, but is the truth. Jesus Christ—rejected, crucified, risen, reigning.

## *A Word for Today's Church*

You may never stand on a stage. You may never be recognized. But if you love the truth, if you speak what is right, if you live with courage in a crooked age—you are not forgotten. You stand in a long line of witnesses, stretching back to Eden and forward to glory. You are part of the church “catholic,” the church universal. The world may not know your name. But your name is written where it matters most.

### *Final Prayer*

Lord, make us faithful.

Let us not chase fame, but truth.

Let us not fear rejection, but compromise.

Let us not forget the prophets who went before us,

And let us never forget the Prophet who died for us, whose blood speaks a better word.

Let our lives be a witness—clear, courageous, and Christ-centered.

Amen.