

**A Time for Prophets**  
**Elijah & Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Amos**  
Tony Cosentino, 2008

**There are 21 prophetic books in the Bible:  
They are the 6 Historical Books, 3 Major Prophets and 12 Minor Prophets.**

**One of the tasks of the prophet is to look at the "signs of the times,"  
and to address them in light of God's word. For all of us, our response to the signs  
of the times is the witness of our life. When God's word directs who we are, our  
lives and words become prophetic.**

**I: Questions for Reflection**

1. Can you think of any prophets in the world today? Who are they?
  
2. What is their message?
  
3. At our Baptism, we were anointed with the Oil of Chrism to share in Jesus' office as *priest, prophet and king*.  
How do we exercise our call to be prophets...  
  
    ...in our Catholic schools?  
  
    ...in our lives?
  
4. What are some of the difficulties we as a prophetic people encounter in trying to live out this call (i.e., the call to live as *prophets*)?
  
5. Jesus says that "whoever welcomes a prophet will receive a prophet's reward."  
What do you think this means?
  
6. The word *prophet* comes from two Greek words: *pro* -meaning "for" and *phetes* – meaning "to speak." Who do you think the biblical prophets were speaking for when they delivered their message to other Israelites?

Who are we speaking for when we try to live prophetically (i.e. when we try to live according to the Gospel) in the ordinary day-by-day responsibilities and relationships?

**II. Please choose one of the Biblical Prophets below (either Elijah or Elisha), and answer the questions that accompany it.**

**A. Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 17-17, 18; 1 Kings 19, 19-21; 2 Kings 1-3, 4-13)**

Describe the start of Elijah's ministry  
(1 Kings 17, 1-6):

Describe the start of Elisha's  
ministry (1 Kings 19, 19-21):

Why do you think God sent Elijah?  
(Read 1Kings 16, 29-34)

Why do you think God sent Elisha?

Briefly recount 2 stories about Elijah  
(1Kings, 17, 8-16, 17-24; 18, 18-40)

Briefly recount 2 stories about Elisha:  
(2Kings Chaps 2 to 5):

How did Elijah's ministry end?  
(2Kg 2, 1-5):

How did Elisha's ministry end?  
(2Kg 13, 14-20)

**B. Isaiah is perhaps the most oft-quoted of the Hebrew Bible's prophets. Please turn to the Book of the prophet Isaiah, and answer the following questions:**

To whom was Isaiah prophesying (ie. who was his message for)? [Is 1,10ff])

Write out or paraphrase the following kinds of messages in Isaiah:  
Hope (Is 2, 1-5; 11):

God's pain/anger:  
Is 42, 14:

Is 42, 24

God's love for the Chosen People:  
Is 43, 1-5

Predictions of destruction:  
Is 10, 1-9

Why do you think God sent Isaiah to His people?

What kind of God do we find in Isaiah?

**C. Please turn to the book of Jeremiah, and find answers to the following questions:**

Describe the call of Jeremiah (Jer 1, 4-10):

How old do you think Jeremiah was when God called him? (Jer 1, 6)

Can you identify a time in your childhood or adult life when you felt a strong sense of God calling you to a deeper relationship with Him?

Put yourself in the place of Eli the high priest in this story. Try and identify times in the lives of children entrusted to your care as parent or teacher, when you sensed you were there to help them answer a deeper call to love and serve God.

What did God send Jeremiah to tell His people? (Jer 2, 20-25; 6, 22-30)

Is Jeremiah's message a happy one? Give an example of why (see chapters 30-31):

Jeremiah 31, 31-34 speaks of a New Covenant, written on our hearts. This is the new and everlasting Covenant made on our behalf by Jesus with the Father. Baptism draws us into this Covenant relationship with Christ and the Father, and gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit, thus making the life of the Trinity our own. The Spirit, poured into our hearts at baptism (see Romans 5, 1-5), inscribes on our hearts the New Law of the Gospel, summed up in the Beatitudes, and fully expressed in Jesus call for love of God and neighbour. This call perfects the messages of all the prophets.

Do you think Jeremiah's message was difficult for God's people to hear? Why?

What kind of God does Jeremiah reveal to us?

**D. Please turn to the book of the Prophet Amos and answer the following:**

Who was Amos? What was his occupation? (Am 7, 14)

What has God done for His people in the past, according to the words of Amos? (Am 2, 10)

Why is God angry with Israel now? (Am 2, 6-8)

What is the message of hope in this book? (Am 9, 11ff)

**E. Please turn to the book of the Prophet Ezekiel and answer the following questions:**

Describe Ezekiel's call (Ez 2,1 – 3,5):

In what form did Ezekiel's prophetic messages from God often come to him?

Describe two problems in Israel that God addressed through Ezekiel (Chaps 6 & 8):

What is the hopeful message in Ezekiel? (Ez 11, 17; 37, 12)

Please read Ez 36, 25-29. How would you interpret the promise of a *new heart* that God offers us? How is this offer still extended to us in our relationship with Christ and his Church?

Read Chapter 37. What do you think this story of the *dry bones* is about? (If you find it confusing, you're not alone. Try going to Yahoo or Google, and key in *Ezekiel, dry bones* and see what happens...)

Who/what are the dry bones to whom we as partakers in Jesus' prophetic ministry (through Baptism – we are anointed *priest, prophet and King*) are called to announce the Good News of the Gospel?

What passage from your reading on Ezekiel did you find most meaningful, and what does it say to you about God's love for you, for us?