

# The Sons of the Prophets, the Poison Pot, and the Unchanging Christ

*Ministry · December 10, 2023*

---

## The Company of Prophets — What They Were and Were Not

---

First Samuel 19 describes a company of prophets gathered at Naioth, with Samuel standing as president over them. When Saul sent messengers to seize David, the Spirit of God came upon them and they prophesied. He sent a second company — they prophesied. A third company — they prophesied. Then Saul himself came, and the Spirit of God came upon him too, and he prophesied naked before Samuel all that day and night.

What does this tell us about the company of prophets? Very little that is commending. Saul was a profane man who did not love the Lord. He went to hell. And yet he prophesied. So did his messengers. The Holy Spirit can use whomever He will for His purposes — even a donkey — and that tells us nothing about the spiritual state of the one being used. The company of prophets prophesied. But so did Saul. That is not, by itself, proof of anything.

What we do know is that Samuel was the one through whom the Lord ministered to Israel. He had been called by God, trained by God, entrusted with a specific commission. These others were a company — sons of the prophets, as they would later be called — whose origin and appointment is not recorded in Scripture. They seem to have gathered around Samuel, and something of the Spirit's activity was with them. But they are not Samuel. And Israel had only one Samuel.

## The Sons of the Prophets — Many Years Later

---

Second Kings 4 finds the sons of the prophets sitting before Elisha in Gilgal during a famine. He told his servant to set on a large pot and boil stew for them. One went out to gather herbs and found a wild vine, gathered a lapful of wild gourds, and shredded them into the pot. When the men ate, they cried out: man of God, there is death in the pot. They could not eat it.

Here is the same pattern, many years on. The sons of the prophets are still together. But the line from Samuel to Elijah to Elisha is not inherited — it is divinely appointed. Each was specifically called by God. The company around them was simply the company around them. No son of a prophet succeeded his father as prophet. No school of the prophets produced a true prophet. God raised prophets as He willed.

Now what happened with the pot? No one asked Elisha what to put in it. The sons of the prophets, facing a famine, saw an opportunity to make the pottage more palatable, more attractive, more substantial. One went out on his own initiative and came back with something that turned out to be poisonous. Elisha cast meal into the pot — the simplest thing, the plainest thing — and there was no more harm in it.

### **The Poison Pot — What Innovation in the Lord's Things Produces**

---

The application is not obscure. The food that the Lord gives to His people is the word of God — plain, simple, nutritious, not naturally attractive to the flesh. It requires developing a taste for it. Isaiah 53 says that when men saw the Lord Jesus there was no beauty that would make them desire Him. He was not Saul, standing head and shoulders above the crowd, fierce and handsome. He was not what the flesh would choose.

But those who have developed a taste for the pottage — the simple unadorned truth of Scripture — find it sustaining. And there has always been, in every generation, a temptation to improve it. To add things that make it more palatable,

more appealing, more attractive to the natural man. A youth pastor. A worship team. A professional speaker who manages the meeting so no one has to do anything uncomfortable. Degrees, titles, certifications. Impressive buildings. All of it designed to take the plain pot of stew and add something to it that makes it taste better.

And what happens? There is death in it. The flesh is fed, the Spirit is grieved, and the soul that depends on that for its nourishment is not actually nourished at all. The sons of the prophets ended up, as Jeremiah's day shows, completely separated from the Lord's mind, prophesying smooth things, saying exactly what the people wanted to hear, and standing in direct opposition to the one true prophet who had a word from the Lord. The innovations meant to make things more palatable led them steadily away from the truth.

*There is death in the pot. — 2 Kings 4:40*

## **Seven Unchangeable Things in Hebrews — No Room for Innovation**

---

The book of Hebrews traces a corresponding theme from a different angle. Seven aspects of the Lord Jesus and His work are presented as unchangeable throughout the book, and together they leave no room — no logical or spiritual space — for any innovation or improvement.

His throne is to the age of the age and the sceptre of His kingdom is unchanging (Hebrews 1:8). His person endures unchanged while the heavens and earth perish (1:11). His priesthood is unchangeable because He continues forever — unlike the Levitical priests who were hindered by death, He is a priest in perpetuity (7:24). His covenant with the house of Israel will never be revised — He will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses and remember their sins no more (8:12). His sacrifice was offered once, by the eternal Spirit, and purifies the conscience permanently (9:13–14). His work is finished — He sat down in perpetuity,

having perfected in perpetuity those who are sanctified (10:12). And His kingdom is not to be shaken, the one immovable reality among all the things that will be removed (12:28).

Hebrews 13:8 draws the conclusion: Jesus Christ is the same — yesterday, and today, and to the ages to come. Seven unchangeable things, and a summary verse that says the person behind all of them is Himself unchangeable. There is nothing to improve. There is no innovation that does not work against what He has already done perfectly.

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and to the ages to come. —  
Hebrews 13:8*

## **The Three Safeguards — Doctrine, Person, Scripture**

---

Second Timothy 3 describes the perilous times of the last days with precision: lovers of self, covetous, boasters, proud, having a form of godliness but denying its power. This was already Paul's day. It is ours.

And then Paul gives three things that are the remedy and safeguard for those days. First, Paul's doctrine — the specific body of truth committed to him, including the mystery of the one body and the head in heaven, which was not revealed before him and which gives us the foundation for understanding what the church is and what we are in Christ. Without that foundation, a believer is vulnerable to being swept into any of the ten thousand systems that exist within Christendom, all of which have some element of the sons of the prophets' poison pot.

Second, the person of Christ. We are not gathered to a doctrine. We are gathered to a person. The Lord Jesus Himself — His unchanging person, His inexhaustible glory, His unchanging love — is what sustains us and what we hold fast to when everything else is shifting.

Third, the Scriptures — every Scripture given by inspiration of God, profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Those who resist the truth, like Jannes and Jambres who withstood Moses, are reprobate concerning the faith. The word they reject is the word that would have kept them. And we hold it fast.

There is no fourth safeguard. There is no innovation that adds to these three. Paul's doctrine, the person of Christ, and the word of God — these are sufficient for every day of the last days, as they were sufficient for every day before them.

---

—