Hi,

The days keep piling up. This is the 7th Saturday since Patti and I went inside. But spring is here and we are enjoying some nice evenings on our patio. We are greatly blessed and these times remind of me of this truth.

Here are today’s updates:

* **My Sunday class will be a Q&A, tomorrow at 12 noon** on [my Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/scottengle). There is still time to email me questions.
* In keeping with this new virus-schedule, my Monday class will be at 3pm and my Tuesday class will be at 11:45. Both will be on my Facebook page.
* People without a Facebook account have been unable to access my personal page for the Facebook Live class events. It should work (or so we thought), but it doesn’t. So . . . [if you don’t have a Facebook account you will have to view the class on my YouTube channel.](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChtwqaUcpZbwyTWnkp6INwQ?view_as=subscriber) I will make sure all recordings are up and ready for viewing by the end of the day of the class. (YouTube willing!).
* The links to my on-line classes, the video recordings of the classes, the class audio podcasts, and the archive of these daily emails can all be found at [www.scottengle.org](http://www.scottengle.org/). All of this week’s recordings and podcasts are posted.
* Keep sending in those movie and book recommendations!

Here is the fifth friendship story: two prophets, Elijah and Elisha.

***1 Kings 19:19-21***

**So he [Elijah] set out from there, and found Elisha son of Shaphat, who was plowing. There were twelve yoke of oxen ahead of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle over him. He left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, “Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” Then Elijah said to him, “Go back again; for what have I done to you?” He returned from following him, took the yoke of oxen, and slaughtered them; using the equipment from the oxen, he boiled their flesh, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out and followed Elijah, and became his servant.**

***2 Kings 2:9-14***

**When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.” Elisha said, “Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.” He responded, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.” As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, “Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.**

**He picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, “Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.**

I searched my Bible from front to back. I couldn’t find the word “mentor” even once. Nonetheless, there are mentors in the Bible. Mentor is a word we all use and understand. If we’ve had one or two good mentors in our lives, we’ve been deeply blessed. Elijah was a mentor to his young friend Elisha.

*Elijah*

In the book of Kings, many of the kings of Israel and Judah get a “report card.” A few kings did what was right in God’s eyes, but most did not. Generally, they were a bad lot and King Ahab of Israel was the worst of the bunch. He “did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all who were before him” (1 Kings 16:30). And his wife was no better. Her name was Jezebel. Ahab and Jezebel abandoned the Lord God and became worshippers of Baal, the chief Canaanite god. And one day, Elijah the Tishbite came calling.

Speaking for the Lord God, Elijah confronted Ahab and predicted a drought. Since Baal was the god of storm and rain in the Canaanite pantheon, Elijah’s prediction of drought was a direct challenge. It would be the Lord v. Baal. This ‘competition’ would come to a head when Elijah challenged the priests of Baal to a contest (see 1 Kings 18; this is a great story!). But the contest was not really a contest at all. Baal was a complete no-show. On that day, Elijah showed all those who had ears to hear and eyes to see that the Lord God was not merely the best god on the block, the Lord was the only God, the creator and ruler of all that was, is, or will be. Baal was no more than a figment of people’s spiritual imagination.

Needless to say, Ahab and Jezebel were not happy about Elijah’s triumph in the contest. So Elijah fled and hid at Mt. Horeb (also called Mt. Sinai) where Moses had met God. There, God spoke to Elijah, telling him that Elisha, son of Shaphat, was to be his successor as God’s prophet.

*Elisha*

So Elijah left the mountain and sought out Elisha. Elijah found the young man plowing his field. As Elisha guided his oxen, Elijah tossed his own mantle (similar to a shawl, worn over the shoulders) over the younger man; Elisha had been called by God. Elisha would leave everything to follow after Elijah. He even slaughtered his ox and sold all his farm equipment. There was no going back. Elisha committed himself 100%.

Later, after the death of Ahab, it was time for Elijah to leave this life. With Elisha standing near him, Elijah was taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot riding upon a whirlwind. Elisha had asked that he might receive a double portion of Elijah’s spirit and, indeed, as Elijah ascended upward his mantle fell back to earth landing beside Elisha. He picked it up and, like Elijah, used it to part the waters of the Jordan river. The protégé would now carry on the work of his mentor.

On a personal level, Elisha’s ministry would be a ministry of life. He would restore to life a young boy who had died. He would save many lives by purifying a pot of poisonous stew. He would feed a hundred men with a few scraps. But Elisha would also follow in the political footsteps of his mentor. Elisha confronted the kings who turned away from the Lord. He played a key part in several Israelite victories. He was even instrumental in the overthrow of a king. Elisha never shirked away from the responsibilities given him by God and passed on to him by Elijah.

*Mentors and friends*

The book of Kings doesn’t tell us much about the personal relationship of Elijah and Elisha. What we do know is that their relationship was unique among all the Old Testament prophets. Elijah passed his mantle on to Elisha. They worked side by side. After Elijah’s departure, Elisha pressed forward with their work. Surely, they were friends.

*A bit more: What is a true prophet?*

A prophet is someone who speaks for God. It seems that there was no shortage of prophets during the age of the kings, or at least those who claimed to speak for God. For example, 1 Kings 22 tells of hundreds of prophets in the court of King Jehoshaphat. Regrettably, the entire bunch told the king what he wanted to hear – that he would enjoy victory in battle. However, one prophet, Micaiah, insisted upon telling the truth – Jehoshaphat would fail . . . and he did. One mark of a true prophet of God was a willingness to tell the king or the entire community the truth they did not want to hear, regardless of the consequences to the prophet.

In his notes on Kings in the *New Interpreter’s Study Bible*, Claude Mariottini outlines several tests that separate true prophets from false prophets. These include (1) Is the prophet willing to tell the community what they don’t want to hear?, (2) Is the prophet vindicated by what actually happens?, and (3) Does the prophet lead people toward or away from worship of the one true God? Finally, “the most trustworthy prophet is the one who will seek guidance from the Lord; who will share with the community what has been seen and heard; and who will continue with the community to test and clarify the word, open always to further guidance” (p. 523).

*More movie and book recommendations on Monday*

‘til Monday, grace and peace,

Scott