During the world wars in the twentieth century, most major fighting armies established formations dedicated to special operations behind enemy lines. They called them special forces. Instead of using conventional combat techniques, these soldiers were used for sabotage and reconnaissance. Since World War II, the operations that these specially trained individuals perform have increased in complexity. Among the major responsibilities of these elite military teams are covert intelligence operations, foreign internal defense, and hostage rescue. In 2018, a Thai junior football team was trapped in the Tham Luang Nang Non cave, and a group of volunteers that included special forces were called upon to conduct the rescue of the twelve children and their coach from the cave.

If ancient Israel had an elite special forces team, it probably would have been made up of youth who had graduated from the schools of the prophets. In fact, the reason this school received its name was that God often called upon the students to serve as prophets for His people.
Write out 2 Kings 4:38–44 from the translation of your choice. You may also re-write the passage in your own words, outline, or mind-map the chapter.
AN ANSWER TO APOSTASY

Shortly after David slew Goliath, he “went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely” (1 Sam. 18:5). Saul even appointed David to serve as the leader of his men of war, giving a favorable platform for David to gain a favorable impression among the people. “So the women sang as they danced, and said: ‘Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.’ Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him” (1 Sam. 18:7, 8). From that point on, Saul not only hated David, but “the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul” (1 Sam. 18:10). After a failed attempt at killing David, the apostate king sent messengers to find him.

“So David fled and escaped, and went to Samuel at Ramah. . . . Then Saul sent messengers to take David. And when they saw the group of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied” (1 Sam. 19:18–20). In fact, Saul sent messengers three times before he himself went in search of David. In each case, David’s persecutors prophesied with the group or school of prophets.

The school of the prophets served as a safeguard against apostasy. Because the Israelites failed in eradicating the nations whom God had commanded them to destroy, they mingled with the Canaanites and soon adopted their customs. “To meet this growing evil, God provided other agencies as an aid to parents in the work of education. From the earliest times, prophets had been recognized as teachers divinely appointed” (Education, 46). To help provide a counterinfluence against social corruption, Samuel gathered young men who strove for spiritual and academic excellence, who later become known as the sons of the prophets.

From these places emerged young men who could be trusted by the nation to serve as leaders and counselors. Through these special operations, the prosperity of the nation was promoted. Not all of these prophets were directly inspired to communicate messages directly from God. These prophets were to serve as teachers of the people to bring the nation back to the way they had walked away from.
AN ANSWER TO FAMINE

The school of the prophets continued under the leadership of Elijah (2 Kings 2). After his ascension to heaven, the school was under the leadership of Elisha. Perhaps some of those prophets were included in heaven’s seven thousand heroes who never bowed the knee to Baal. In one instance where the school of the prophets is mentioned, Elisha came to Gilgal, where there was famine in the land. A large pot was set before them with boiling stew for the sons of the prophets to eat. Wild edible plants were put into the stew, and when the food was poured out for the men to eat it, it was discovered that there was something deadly in the pot. Elisha then poured flour into the pot, and the food became edible.

Later, a man came from Baal-shalishah with bread and corn to give to the men to eat. However, the food was insufficient to fill the hungry men. At the word of the prophet, the food was set before the young men, where they ate and had leftovers. In the schools of Elisha, the Bible portrays miracles dealing with food during a time of famine.

The purpose of famine is not to kill people from hunger. Even though there was one in the land, God intended that His people be fed. The school of the prophets provided these young students an opportunity to develop their faith and to recognize that the answer was not dependent on them; it was dependent on what God could do for them. It was also a lesson to teach them that every crisis should be a call to prayer. Even after there was “death in the pot” (2 Kings 4:40), God miraculously preserved the lives of each of the students.

It is the work of education to develop these kinds of young people—individuals who have an experience with God to impart to others. Students must not have merely a theoretical understanding of God, but a living experience with Him that leads to a confidence in God’s ability and full persuasion that God’s character is love. Our world today needs schools that will elevate nations, churches, and communities by developing pupils who strive for spiritual as well as academic excellence, people whom God can use for such a time as this.
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

1 Kings 20:35–43  
2 Kings 2:1–18  
2 Kings 6:1–7

What other verses come to mind in connection with the school of the prophets?

Review your memorized verse from 2 Kings 4:38–44.
The parable of the pearl of great price is one of the shortest stories that Jesus told. It is part of a string of parables that Jesus tells regarding the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 13. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it” (Matt. 13:45, 46).

This parable can be looked at from different angles. From one perspective, the pearl can symbolize Jesus selling everything He had in order to save lost humanity. God looked at humanity not as worthless but as what we might become in the hands of a gifted Merchant.

The second approach looks at Jesus as the pearl of great price. This perspective is somewhat confusing for people. Salvation is free to us. To some, this parable not only implies that heaven must be paid for but that it must be paid for at great cost. However, “we are to seek for the pearl of great price, but not in worldly marts or in worldly ways. The price we are required to pay is not gold or silver, for this belongs to God. Abandon the idea that temporal or spiritual advantages will win for you salvation” (Christ’s Object Lessons, 117).

This parable simply and clearly states that, when it comes to Jesus, value is a radical concept. Unlike the hidden treasure that precedes this parable of the pearl, the seller knows the value. The purchaser of the pearl is not getting a good deal, he is getting a fair deal—he is paying the amount of money that the pearl is valued for. It just so happens that in order for the buyer to afford the pearl, he must sell everything he has.

This is where value becomes radical. There are some people who can afford a car that costs as much as another person’s house. One athlete owns a watch that costs as much as the person’s car. This means that the homeowner is actually able to purchase the watch the athlete wears. The only thing stopping this person from doing so is the fact that he chose to buy the house over the watch. He could wear an expensive watch and be homeless. However, this, to him (and to many others), would be too radical of an idea. The watch and the car, although equal in value to the house, are not worth as much to the person who can afford only one of those three objects.

In the case of Christ, we can’t have Him and hold onto the world in any of its forms. To have Him, we must give up even more than material things like watches, cars, and houses. We must also sell our way of thinking. In fact, we must even sell our motivations for learning, living, and being. This is how radical the value of Christ is.

We cannot earn salvation, but we are to seek for it with as much interest and perseverance as though we would abandon everything in the world for it. . . . There are some who seem to be always seeking for the heavenly pearl. But they do not make an entire surrender of their wrong habits. They do not die to self that Christ may live in them. Therefore they do not find the precious pearl. They have not overcome unholy ambition and their love for worldly attractions. They do not take up the cross and follow Christ in the path of self-denial and sacrifice. Almost Christians, yet not fully Christians, they seem near the kingdom of heaven, but they cannot enter there. Almost but not wholly saved, means to be not almost but wholly lost (Christ’s Object Lessons, 117–118).
Review the memory verse. How does it apply to your life this week?

After this week’s study of the chapter, what personal applications you can make?

What are applications you can make in your school, family, workplace, and church?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/edu11-7

GOD’S HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

“From the earliest times, prophets had been recognized as teachers divinely appointed. In the highest sense the prophet was one who spoke by direct inspiration, communicating to the people the messages he had received from God. But the name was given also to those who, though not so directly inspired, were divinely called to instruct the people in the works and ways of God. For the training of such a class of teachers, Samuel, by the Lord’s direction, established the schools of the prophets.

“These schools were intended to serve as a barrier against the wide-spreading corruption, to provide for the mental and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the prosperity of the nation by furnishing it with men qualified to act in the fear of God as leaders and counsellors. To this end, Samuel gathered companies of young men who were pious, intelligent, and studious. These were called the sons of the prophets. As they studied the word and the works of God, His life-giving power quickened the energies of mind and soul, and the students received wisdom from above. The instructors were not only versed in divine truth, but had themselves enjoyed communion with God, and had received the special endowment of His Spirit. They had the respect and confidence of the people, both for learning and for piety. In Samuel’s day there were two of these schools—one at Ramah, the home of the prophet, and the other at Kirjath-jearim. In later times others were established.

“The pupils of these schools sustained themselves by their own labor in tilling the soil or in some mechanical employment. In Israel this was not thought strange or degrading; indeed, it was regarded as a sin to allow children to grow up in ignorance of useful labor. Every youth, whether his parents were rich or poor, was taught some trade. Even though he was to be educated for holy office, a knowledge of practical life was regarded as essential to the greatest usefulness. Many, also, of the teachers supported themselves by manual labor.

“In both the school and the home much of the teaching was oral; but the youth also learned to read the Hebrew writings, and the parchment rolls of the Old Testament Scriptures were open to their study. The chief subjects of study in these schools were the law of God, with the instruction given to Moses, sacred history, sacred music, and poetry. In the records of sacred history were traced the footsteps of Jehovah. The great truths set forth by the types in the service of the sanctuary were brought to view, and faith grasped the central object of all that system—the Lamb of God, that was to take away the sin of the world. A spirit of devotion was cherished. Not only were the students taught the duty of prayer, but they were taught how to pray, how to approach their Creator, how to exercise faith in Him, and how to understand and obey the teachings of His Spirit. Sanctified intellect brought forth from the treasure house of God things new and old, and the Spirit of God was manifested in prophecy and sacred song.

“These schools proved to be one of the means most effective in promoting that righteousness which ‘exalteth a nation.’ Proverbs 14:34. In no small degree they aided in laying the foundation of that marvelous prosperity which distinguished the reigns of David and Solomon.

“The principles taught in the schools of the prophets were the same that molded David’s character and shaped his life. The word of God was his instructor. ‘Through Thy precepts,’ he said, ‘I get understanding. . . I have inclined mine heart to perform Thy statutes.’ Psalm 119:104–112. It was this that caused the Lord to pronounce David, when in his youth He called him to the throne, ‘a man after Mine own heart.’ Acts 13:22.”

(Education, 46–48)
Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

What would have been in the curriculum of the school of the prophets?

How does the school of the prophets protect against apostasy and social evils?

Why are spiritual and academic excellence necessary?

What would a school look like that espoused God’s radical understanding of value?

After studying this week’s topic, how can education change the world?

Would you have desired to enroll in one of the schools of the prophets? How would you have fared?

What functions as the school of the prophets today?

How is this week’s lesson linked to the previous weeks?