



Truth For These Times



30. THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

Use with Chart "Tests of a True Prophet"

Before man sinned God spoke to him on a face-to-face basis, but after this, God made His will known through the gift of prophecy. Through prophets the Bible was written that all might know God's will for mankind. God revealed Himself to the prophets in a supernatural way, then commanded them to reveal His will to the people.

2 Peter 1:21 For prophecy never came by the will of man, but HOLY MEN OF GOD SPOKE AS *THEY WERE* MOVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Bible is no invention of man. It comes direct from God, written by the prophets under inspiration.

Numbers 12:6 Then He said, "Hear now My words: IF THERE IS A PROPHET AMONG YOU, *I*, the LORD, MAKE MYSELF KNOWN TO HIM in a VISION; I speak to him in a DREAM."

Here is revealed the way God contacted the prophets – visions and dreams.

Ephesians 4:11-13 And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some PROPHETS, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

The Christian church has been given the gifts of the Spirit in order that it might progress. Through these gifts God seeks to mould the character of His people that they might grow spiritually. Notice one of these gifts is the gift of prophecy. We should expect to see it in the Christian church.

Ezekiel 3:17 Son of man, I have made you a WATCHMAN for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me.

What was the purpose of a prophet? Here Ezekiel is said to be a watchman. He gave God's people appropriate warnings of their spiritual dangers to keep them on the straight and narrow path. He was always watching for danger signals to save the people of God from disaster.



Prophets called people to repentance and gave them messages from God.

2 Chronicles 36:15,16 And the LORD God of their fathers sent *warnings* to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending *them*, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked THE MESSENGERS OF GOD, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets,

until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till *there was* no remedy.

Not only was a prophet a watchman, he was also a messenger; faithfully delivering the message God had given him. Unfortunately the message was not always heeded. The purpose of the prophet was to guide and direct God's people, and to call them to repentance. It is interesting that not all prophets made future predictions, yet this is what many feel is the distinguishing mark of a prophet. Samuel, Ezra and John the Baptist made no predictions of the future. Not all prophets wrote portions of the Bible either; for instance, Elijah and Elisha. The chief work of a prophet was to speak on God's behalf; to be His mouthpiece.



Anna the Prophetess was present at Jesus' birth.

Matthew 23:37, 38 **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who KILLS THE PROPHETS and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate.**

The world was not worthy of these men of God. The people would not listen, and to stifle the voice of God, they had killed the prophets He sent. As a rule, future generations accepted the prophets of the past who were martyred, but killed the prophet living in their own time.

Acts 11:27 And in these days PROPHETS came from Jerusalem to Antioch.

Prophets are by no means limited to the Old Testament. Here we see them spoken of in the New Testament.

Luke 2:34,36 Then SIMEON blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against. Now there was one, ANNA, A PROPHETESS, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity.

Here are two prophets living at the time of Christ's birth: Simeon and Anna. Some are amazed to think that a woman should fit into the prophetic work, but prophetesses are not uncommon in the Bible. There was Miriam, who prophesied by the Red Sea. There was Deborah, who went into battle with Barak.



Satan is angry with God's people who have the Testimony of Jesus.

Acts 21:9,10 Now this man had FOUR VIRGIN DAUGHTERS WHO PROPHESED. And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

Philip, the evangelist, had four daughters with the prophetic gift. God makes no difference between male and female when He bestows His gifts on mankind.

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring,

who KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND HAVE THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST.

This amazing gift is also to be found in God's remnant (or last) church. God's people are described in the last days as those who keep His commandments, and have the testimony of Jesus. What is the 'testimony of Jesus'?

Revelation 19:10 For the testimony of Jesus is THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY.

The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The Bible is clear that the gift of prophecy can be expected in our day. Seventh-day Adventists believe they represent God's remnant church, and in the person of Mrs. E.G. White, God manifested the gift of prophecy. Many ridicule any prophetic claim, but what is the Bible's admonition?



Ellen White.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 Do not quench the Spirit. DO NOT DESPISE PROPHECIES. Test all things; hold fast what is good.

Here is advice that we should not scorn prophetic claims, but rather, put it to the test to see if it is genuine. "Prove all things." Does Ellen G. White measure up to the test? Let us examine the following evidence.

When the Advent movement arose around 1840, God sought a man to be His spokesman. The gift was given to a talented young man by the name of Hazen Foss. He refused to relate the vision given to him, and was told by the angel that the gift of prophecy would be given to the weakest of the weak. The next person to receive the gift was a humble, godly woman, named Ellen Gould Harmon. She was brought up in a Methodist home and was converted at a Bible camp meeting at the age of 12. Unlike her predecessor who was offered the prophetic gift, she was poorly educated. She had only three years of primary schooling. She received her first vision at the age of 16, at a prayer meeting where over 60 people were in attendance. She lived for 88 years, during which time she received over 2,000 visions and prophetic dreams.

She married a young minister, James White, and four boys were born into their home. She was a widow for 34 years, spending her time caring for the poor, the needy, and orphans. She also travelled and conducted public meetings where audiences up to 15,000 to 20,000 were held spellbound. She was a prolific writer. Her books, if placed flat on one another, would reach the height of a man.



The White Family.

As Mrs. White felt the presence of the Lord coming upon her, she would say, glory, three times. She would then go into vision, and her physical strength would leave her. She would then be strengthened supernaturally. It was impossible for any person to move her arms from whatever position she placed them. On one occasion she held a

family Bible, weighing 18 lbs, with outstretched arm at shoulder level for half an hour. Mr America, who tried the same feat several years ago, managed to hold it for only 4 minutes. These

physical phenomena were also experienced by Bible prophets. See Numbers 24:3,4 and Daniel 10:8,17,18.

Mrs. White's eyes were open in vision, but she was not conscious of her surroundings. Her look showed no appearance of a vacant stare; instead she appeared to be watching something.

At the commencement of her visions she would slowly exhale until all breath was gone. She did not breath again until the vision was over, and some visions lasted over two hours. On various occasions doctors examined her and tested her while she was in vision. Two sceptics at one time held her nose and mouth for ten minutes, but her colour, blood pressure and heartbeat remained normal.

Her writings were never intended to be an addition to Scripture. Rather they were meant to point the reader to the Scriptures, thus leading one to a higher and holier life. She has never been regarded as infallible – she was human – but her messages of truth uplifted the Bible and Jesus Christ. It is true that there are false prophets. Jesus warned His followers to beware. Matthew 7:15-20. He said the test of a true prophet was by his fruits. The fruits of Mrs. White's life reveal her as a genuine Christian. Her life was above reproach.

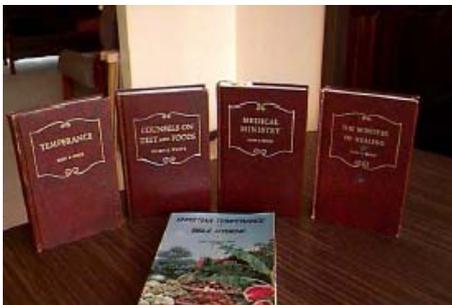


Ellen in later years.

She did not make many predictions of the future, but history now testifies to the accuracy of their fulfilment.

Signs of the Times 1890:

“The tempest is coming, and we must get ready for its fury, by having repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord will arise to shake terribly the earth. We shall see troubles on all sides. Thousands of ships will be hurled into the depths of the sea. Navies will go down, and human life will be sacrificed by the millions. Fires will break out unexpectedly, and no human effort will be able to quench them. The palaces of the earth will be swept away in the fury of the flames. Disasters by rail will become more and more frequent: confusion, collision, and death without a moment's warning on the great lines of travel. The end is near, probation is closing. O let us seek God while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.”



Some of Ellen White's writing.

In 1904 she wrote, “Soon great trouble will arise among the nations ... trouble that will not cease until Jesus comes.”

Soon after she wrote, World War 1 broke out, and the world saw these things happen. Travel was slow in her day, but her predictions of disaster on the lines of travel certainly came to pass.

Many have tried to misrepresent Mrs. White. Some have even said she was mad, but only those who never knew her.

Those who were acquainted with her personally had the utmost regard for her, whether they were in the church or not.

On reading her books one is led into a deeper love for Christ, and a better understanding of the Bible. Many have come back to God through reading her works. Her constant aim was to exalt the Scriptures. She said, “I take the Bible as it is, as the inspired Word. Let not a mind or a hand be engaged in criticising the Bible, cling to it as it reads. I commend you to this book.” *Selected Messages*, Vol.1 pages 17, 18. Concerning her writings she said “The Lord has given them a lesser light (her writings) to lead men and women to the greater light” (the Bible). Her writings are like a powerful telescope. It does not put new stars into the sky, but reveals clearly what is already there. Her writings are to give a clearer understanding of the Bible.

As a result of an accident she attended school for only three grades. Strangely enough, she has written volumes on the principles of education. One of her best-known works is a book called *Education*.



One of many of Ellen White's predictions fulfilled – destruction of the Review & Herald building.

Leading educators have upheld this book as one of the best in its field. The government minister for education in Yugoslavia in the late 1930's, Dr Paja Radosavlyevish, was a highly educated man. He studied in Europe and U.S.A. to prepare a work on the art of Pedagogy (the science of teaching). Upon returning home he published a book, and his name was clearly displayed as the author. However, the book was discovered to be a word for word translation of the book *Education* by Ellen G. White. Remember, she had only three years of schooling. She could not have produced such authoritative works unless she received divine enlightenment.

Approximately 40% of her writings pertain to healthful living. Her understanding of nutrition and health were far ahead of her time. Medical science has discovered many things in the field of health, which were written about by Mrs. White in the last century. For example, in *Ministry of Healing*, page 327 she said, “Tobacco is a slow, insidious, but most malignant poison”. Today we know tobacco contains over 20 poisons, including nicotine, one of the most deadly poisons known.

Her writings excel on the subject of Christ and His saving grace. Christ said, “By their fruits you will know them”. Notice the beauty and inspiration of the following passages:



Evangelism, page 185: “Lift up Jesus, you that teach the people. Lift Him high in sermons, in song, in prayer. Let your powers be directed to pointing souls confused, bewildered, lost, to the Lamb of God Let the science of salvation be the burden of every sermon, the theme of every song”.

Steps To Christ, page 67: “He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in the place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.”

The perils of the last days are upon the world and the church, but soon the ‘harbour’ will be reached. Before we arrive, treacherous waters must be crossed, but we can thank God for sending a reliable pilot, the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy to guide the ship safely home.

To the remnant church God has promised the Spirit of Prophecy. It has been given to help God’s people in the last days, to mould a character like Jesus. It has been given to prepare us for the eternal kingdom.

Just a final word of admonition: 1 Thess.5:19-21 “Despise not prophesyings.” 2 Chronicles 20:20 “Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; BELIEVE HIS PROPHETS, so shall ye prosper”.

To believe the writings of Ellen G. White is not to believe a woman – it is to believe God Himself. She was inspired, as were the Bible prophets. To reject what she has written is to reject the counsel of God Himself, even as the Jews rejected the prophets’ warnings many years ago. In love, God has given us the Spirit of Prophecy, to save us from the deceptions of the world. Friend, if you wish to prosper spiritually, “Believe His prophets”.

The Tests of a Prophet

Spiritual Tests	References	Physical Tests	References
Speak according to God’s Word	Isa 8:20	Loses all natural strength	Dan 10:8,16,17
The predictions of the Prophet come to pass.	Jer 28:9	Is supernaturally strengthened	Dan 10:18,19
Point people to the true God	Deut 13:1-4 1 Kings 18:21	Have their eyes open	Num 24:3
Encourage obedience to the Ten Commandments	2 Chron 24:19,20 Rev 12:17	Does not breathe	Dan 10:17
Their work produces good fruit	Matt 7:15-20	Speaks without breathing	Dan 10:17-20
Confess that Christ is come in the flesh	1 John 4:2,3	Tongue controlled by the Lord	2 Sam 23:2
Prepare people to meet the Lord	Luke 1:17	Unconscious of natural surroundings	2 Cor 12:2-4

Review Sheet – The Gift of Prophecy

Assignment: Read the Bible study carefully before answering the following questions.

1. How did God often reveal Himself to the prophets? Numbers 12:6
I, the LORD, make myself known to him in _____ ... in a _____.
2. What is the second spiritual gift mentioned in Ephesians 4:11?
And he gave some *to be* apostles, some _____.
3. What did God call the prophet Ezekiel? Ezekiel 3:17
Son of man, I have made you _____.
4. What is another special work of a prophet? 2 Chronicles 36:16
But they mocked _____.
5. How were prophets generally accepted in past times? Matthew 23:37-38
“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who _____.
6. Are prophets limited to the Old Testament? Acts 11:27
And in these days _____.
7. Name two others engaged in prophetic work in the New Testament Luke 2:34,36.
1. _____ 2. _____.
8. The Bible records a number of women with the prophetic gift. What were Philip’s four daughters able to do? Acts 21:9,10
Now this man had _____.
9. What characteristics are to be found in God’s last Church? Revelation 12:17
The rest of her offspring, _____
_____.
10. What is the testimony of Jesus? Revelation 19:10
The testimony of Jesus is _____.
11. What admonition is given regarding attitude toward prophetic claims? 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21
Do not quench the Spirit, _____.
12. How shall we prosper and be established? 2 Chronicles 20:20
Believe in the _____, and you shall be established; _____, and
you shall _____.”

Do you believe the gift of prophecy has been given by God to the Seventh-day Adventist Church? _____.