

# DISCOVER PROPHECY



## Proving the Prophets

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### Modern Prophets

Many times already we have identified the main characteristics of God's people in the last days preceding the second coming of His Son, Jesus Christ. The devil, of course is not at all happy with those who have chosen to be faithful to God and is doing all in his power and using all of his strength to destroy them. The Bible says, "So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" Revelation 12:17. Here we see the devil enraged with God's church and the people within the church. He wants to destroy those who are faithfully keeping the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. What is the testimony of Jesus? Revelation 19:10 says, "Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, 'Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'" Revelation 22:8 reads much like the previous verse but even more so identifies the meaning of the spirit of prophecy. "I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. But he said to me, 'Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.'" The testimony of Jesus then is the gift of prophecy or the presence of the prophetic gift in the church.

As we think about prophecy and prophets, it is interesting to note the great interest that has arisen in modern prophets in the last few years. More than 2000 of the nation's leading newspapers carry prophetic columns. Books on prophecy, modern prophets, New Age, and astrology sell by the millions each year. And as with all true gifts, Satan has come up with his many counterfeits.

Christ warned of false prophets when He said, "For false christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect" Matthew 24:24. "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves" Matthew 7:15. As

one of the signs of the last generation, we see hundreds of false prophets, astrologers, and psychics all around us.

### True Prophets

Though there are so many today that are false prophets; pulling people away from the truth and Jesus Christ, it is still true that God has genuine prophets. The gift of prophecy, though misused and counterfeited, is one of the characteristics of God's church. The Bible teaches that the gift of prophecy was always to be an active gift in the church to the end of time. "Therefore it says, 'When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.'.... And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;" Ephesians 4:8,11-12.

The gift of prophecy was very active in the early New Testament church. "Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul" Acts 13:1. And again elsewhere it reads, "On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses" Acts 21:9. We see God used both men and women as prophets in the church.

### A Lost Gift

So why did the prophets seem to disappear out of the church? In order to answer that we must go to the Bible. In Jeremiah God gave the people two requirements. "And you will say to them, thus says the Lord, 'If you will not listen to Me, to walk in My law which I have set before you, to listen to the words of My servants the prophets, whom I have been sending to you again and again, but you have not listened; then I will make this house like Shiloh, and this city I will make a curse to all the nations of the earth'" Jeremiah 26:4-6. Keep the law and obey the prophets. These two things- law and

prophets- always go together. If God's people turned from the law, He withdrew the gift of prophecy. We can read of this happening in Lamentations 2:9, "Her gates have sunk into the ground, He has destroyed and broken her bars. Her king and her princes are among the nations; The law is no more. Also, her prophets find no vision from the Lord." There was no vision because the law was not being kept.

We find the same warning again, "Disaster will come upon disaster and rumor will be added to rumor; then they will seek a vision from a prophet, but the law will be lost from the priest and counsel from the elders" Ezekiel 7:26. (Also note Eze. 20:3-13)

Why then has the gift of prophecy been lost? The gift of prophecy faded out of the Christian church exactly when the law began to be changed and neglected. And this is why most Christian churches today do not have or believe in this gift.

But now, when the law and the commandments were restored, God has also restored the gift of prophecy. That is exactly what Revelation 12:17 says! They keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus, the spirit of prophecy.

I am happy to tell you that all the gifts of the spirit are alive and well including the gift of prophecy in God's church. However, the question is then raised. If there is a true gift of prophecy and a false gift of prophecy, how are we to determine the true from the false?

### **Testing the Prophets**

When the United States government became concerned about the great number of counterfeit \$20 bills in the United States, they set up a six week course in Washington D.C. for bank tellers all over the nation. They met there to learn how to detect counterfeit money. How many counterfeit bills do you think they had to study in that six week period? None! They only studied the genuine. And knowing the genuine, a counterfeit became immediately apparent. So it is with prophets. Study the genuine, and you will know the counterfeit.

Here are ten biblical tests you can give to determine if someone is a genuine prophet or a counterfeit.

#### *1. Visions and Dreams:*

"He said, 'Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream'" Numbers 12:6. God speaks in visions and dreams. A prophet does not teach his/her own ideas, but is God's mouthpiece. There are two kinds of revelations- written like Daniel and John; and oral

like Enoch and Elijah who did not write the Bible, but were certainly prophets.

It's significant that God does not speak through crystal balls, tarot cards, palm reading, or astrology. In fact, God says those who practice these things will be lost! "Stand fast now in your spells and in your many sorceries with which you have labored from your youth; perhaps you will be able to profit, perhaps you may cause trembling. You are wearied with your many counsels; let now the astrologers, those who prophesy by the stars, those who predict by the new moons, stand up and save you from what will come upon you. Behold, they have become like stubble, fire burns them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame; there will be no coal to warm by nor a fire to sit before!" Isaiah 47:12-14.

#### *2. 100 Percent Accurate:*

A prophet of God is always 100 percent accurate. A true prophet does not guess, he tells what God has said. "But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him" Deuteronomy 18:20-22. "The prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet comes to pass, then that prophet will be known as one whom the Lord has truly sent" Jeremiah 28:9.

This point alone does away with the vast majority of modern prophets. Jean Dixon, after a careful survey, came up less than 30 percent accurate. Was God wrong the other 70 percent? No way! The same goes for many highly acclaimed prophets. Nostradamus has failed hundreds of prophecies. So has Edgar Casey. Both were highly involved in astrology, a practice totally condemned by God's word. A leading Christian magazine compared the predictions of leading prophets and psychics at the beginning of the year with their accuracy quotient at the end of the year and found it averaged 16 percent. You could do that good! If it is a prophet of God, it must be 100 percent accurate.

### 3. *In Harmony With the Bible:*

If a prophet is to be of God, then she must convey truth that is in harmony with the Bible. A prophet's teachings are always 100 percent in agreement with scripture. "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them.' You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him" Deuteronomy 13: 1-4. "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn" Isaiah 8:20.

Like Elijah calling Israel from idolatry and Nehemiah calling for a reform in sabbath keeping. John the Baptist reproved Herod for adultery. Their teachings were always biblical which is why the Bible, written by many people over many years, agrees with itself. God never contradicts.

This is the most important point, one that even God says He will test on us. Satan can also predict the future since he controls much of it. So to disguise his deceptions more cleverly he sends prophets that predict, and what they predict actually comes to pass, so they appear genuine. But, the things such prophets teach are actually contrary to the Bible.

Thus is why it is so important to study and know your Bible for yourself. If a modern prophet teaches anything contrary to the Bible, throw out the modern prophet and stick with the Bible alone!

### 4. *No Fee For Service:*

A True prophet does not prophecy for fees, charges or payment. 2 Kings 5:15,16.

### 5. *Biblical Interpretation:*

A true prophet does not give her own private interpretation of her or of another prophet's prophecy; it is always the Lord's exegesis (explanation) and interpretation, based on what He has revealed. 2 Peter 1:20.

### 6. *In The Name of the Lord:*

A true prophet, with all other things equal, does not prophecy in his own name; it is always in the name of the Lord. 2 Peter 1:21.

### 7. *Reveals Sin:*

A true prophet points out the sins, transgressions, and the iniquities of the people against God. Isaiah 58:1.

### 8. *Warning of Judgment:*

A true prophet warns people of God's coming judgments. Isaiah 24:19-21.

### 9. *Edifies the Church:*

A true prophet edifies the church with counsel and advice in religious matters. 1 Corinthians 14:3,4.

### 10. *Recognized By Works:*

A true prophet can be recognized by the results of his works. Matthew 7:16-20.

## **The Gift Manifested**

As God's people in the early 1800's all began to read and study, they found that the truths of the Bible became clear. Each church contributed truth until most all that had been lost through the Dark Ages was restored. One of the great truths that had been abolished and hidden by years of tradition was the ten commandments. As the truth was discovered, God again has a group of people who obeyed Him and kept His commandments. He then did what He always had done- He restored all the gifts of the Spirit- including prophecy.

There was a young lady born in Maine in 1827 named Ellen Harmon, later Ellen White. She was a Methodist Christian and among thousands of others who joined the movement to find and restore the truth. At the age of 17, she had her first vision. As she continued through life, with over 2,000 visions, often in public, ranging from a few minutes to over four hours. This group of Christians, from various denominations, soon became known as Adventists, and Ellen White was a very active participant. Many believed her visions were from God, and that He used her to restore the spirit of prophecy in the Remnant church.

## **Point of Clarification**

It is important at this point to clarify some things. You may ask, "How would I know if she or anyone else was a genuine prophet of God?" Of course you can not know until you have had time to "test the spirit" yourself. Also it is important to realize that the Adventist church does NOT base any of its beliefs on Ellen White or her visions. To establish this firmly, let me quote from the official publication of the church's doctrine.

*Seventh-day Adventist Believe*, page 227, "The writings of Ellen White are not a substitute for Scripture. They cannot be placed on the same level.

The Holy Scriptures stand alone, the unique standard by which her and all other writings must be judged and to which they must be subject. The Bible is the supreme standard. Seventh-day Adventists fully support the reformation principle of sola scriptura, the Bible as its own interpreter and the Bible alone as the basis of all doctrines.”

You will find that Ellen White said the same thing. In her first book, published in 1851, she said, “I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By the Word we are to be judge.... In His Word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience.... Little heed is given to the Bible,” she said. Therefore, “the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light.”

You see, she said hers was a “lesser light” to lead people back to the greater light- the Holy Bible.

### **Testing the Prophet**

Today millions of Christians throughout the world have tested Ellen White’s gift of prophecy by the Bible tests and believe she passes all the tests completely. Let’s look for a moment.

1. Ellen White received her information in visions and dreams. Many times doctors would examine her while in vision and her supernatural gift was in perfect harmony with other Bible prophets.
2. Ellen White’s gift of prophecy was been proven 100 percent correct. Her amazing insights and writings in areas of religion, education, health, evangelism, prophecy, nutrition and medical science are still amazing the world today.  
Seventy years before the Surgeon General’s report on smoking, she warned about the effects of smoking and said it caused cancer. The world did not discover that until 1964.  
She also talked about prenatal influence and the electrical current in the body which was only recently discovered. She predicted the ecumenical movement, the joining of Protestants and Catholics in a time when Protestants were still protesting. Hundreds of other examples could be given.
3. What about being 100 percent in agreement with the Bible? I know for me this was the ultimate test. Having spent some time exposed to Mormonism

with the prophet Joseph Smith, Jehovah Witnesses with J. Rutherford and Russell, Christian Science with Mary Baker Eddy, et cetera. I was extremely skeptical. However, knowing that this was a Bible teaching and wanting to follow the counsel to “prove all things,” I began reading *Steps to Christ* and *The Desire of Ages*. These books are the highest acclaimed of all ever written of the life of Christ and the process of salvation.

In her life, Ellen White wrote over 55,000 pages, her books total more than 100. She is the fourth most translated writer in earth’s history. In all these books, her words are always in harmony with the Bible. Jesus Christ, the Son of God is always exalted. It is noteworthy also that Ellen White cautioned against her writings being exalted or proclaimed above the Bible. She sensed that there would be some who sincerely took her words and writings and would abuse them. In one of her sermons she specifically addressed this in these words:

“Lay Sister White right to one side: lay her to one side. Don’t you never quote my words again as long as you live, until you can obey the Bible. When you take the Bible and make that your food, and your meat, and your drink, and make that the elements of your character, when you can do that you will know better how to receive some counsel from God. But here is the Word, the precious Word, exalted before you today. And don’t you give a rap any more what Sister White said - Sister White said this, and Sister White said that, and Sister White said the other thing. But say, ‘Thus saith the Lord God of Israel,’ and then you do just what the Lord God of Israel does, and what He says.” Verbatim report of remarks by Mrs. E. G. White, at a meeting held in Battle Creek College library, April, at the General Conference of 1901. Spalding and Magan Collection, page 167.

There are unfortunately some sincere people who only know how to quote Ellen White. She saw that this misuse would lead many people to see the remnant church as a cult rather than a Bible based church. And so we would do well to follow her advice and let the Bible alone be what is preached and taught.

### **Decide For Yourself**

When I had a friend in high school that was a Mormon and I wanted to understand her teachings, we got together with some of their “missionaries.” It took only a few weeks to come to the realization that in

order to believe the teachings of their church, you had to accept Joseph Smith as a prophet because many of their teachings are based not on the scriptures alone, but primarily on the book of Mormon- which they advocate as “another testament of Jesus Christ.” As you well know, the teachings here have been on the scriptures alone. The teachings of this church are not based on the teachings of any individual, but rather on God’s Word, the Bible.

In fact, because our teachings are based on the Bible, you do not have to believe that Ellen White is a true prophet of God to believe the teachings of the church. Many who choose to join the church do so because they have found that this church follows the Bible. You don’t have to believe in Ellen White, just your Bible. Most usually take a few years to examine and study her materials before they come to the conclusion that she is indeed a prophet of God. I would encourage you to do the same. Make your choice to study the Bible, choose Jesus and His Word. Then, as time permits, read what Ellen White has to say and ask yourself two important questions. Does she speak in harmony with the Bible and does she draw you closer to Jesus? You will find that she does both.