

Bible Doctrines

- 2 Peter 1: 21. The prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit.
Hosea 12: 13. God guided and preserved Israel by a prophet.
2 Chronicles 20: 20. The prosperity of Israel, was dependent upon the attitude of the people to God's prophets.
2 Kings 17: 13. God sent messages of warning to the people by the prophets.
2 Kings 17: 15. The messages of the prophets were called testimonies.

Note-Though it is true that all we have in the Bible came through the ministry of the prophets, it is also true that there were many prominent prophets who made no additions to the Bible. Elijah, Elisha, etc., have written no books. Also some of the prophets wrote books, but the books they wrote do not form a part of the Scriptures. 1 Chronicles 29: 29. Israel was sent into captivity for refusing to heed the prophets. 2 Chronicles 36. 14-17.

2. God did not dispense with the gift of prophecy in New Testament times, but after Christ returned to heaven He still used the prophets as His medium of communication.
Luke 2: 25, 26; Christ was announced by three prophets at His Matthew 11: 9. First advent.
Acts 11: 27, 28; There were prophets in the church after Christ's [Acts 21:8-11; 13:1] ascension to heaven.
Revelation 1:1. The last book of the New Testament (along with the other books of the New Testament) was written by a prophet.

3. After the close of the apostolic era, the gift of prophecy practically disappeared from the professed church of Christ, for the same reason, doubtless, that it was removed from Israel in Old Testament times.

- Ezekiel 7: 26. God removed the gift of prophecy when the people departed from His law.
Proverbs 29:18. Obedience to the law and clearness -of vision go together.
2 Chronicles 15: 3. When the people disobeyed, the teaching priest (prophet) ceased.
Daniel 7: 25. After the apostles' day an apostate power (the Papacy) led the people away from God's law. This is evidently the reason why the gift of prophecy was absent from the church.

4. The Bible reveals that the church of the last days will be a commandment-keeping church, and will also possess the gift of prophecy.

- Revelation 12: 17. Two outstanding characteristics of the remnant church-the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus.
Revelation 19: 10. "The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy."
Joel 2: 28-32. Joel's prophecy of the gift of prophecy in the last days.

MEMORIZE: Revelation 12: 17.

Questions on the Lesson

1. What was God's method of communicating with men in ancient times?
2. How did God reveal His secrets? Explain the method of His operation.
3. How was Israel advantaged through the prophets?
What was the result of their heeding the messages of the prophets?
Why were they sent into captivity?
4. Did all prophets contribute to the writing of the Scriptures?
5. Give evidence that the Lord did not dispense with prophets after the ascension.
6. Explain the reason for the absence of the prophetic gift after the first century.
7. What would lead one to expect a revival of the prophetic gift in the last days?

68. TESTS OF A TRUE PROPHET

1. There is need to test the claims of one professing to exercise the gift of prophecy, because Satan counterfeits the work of God.

- 1 John 4: 1. We are to try the spirits. Why?
Matthew 7: 15. Christ's warning against false prophets.

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Matthew 24: 24. False prophets will appear, especially in the last days.
1 Thessalonians 5: 20,21. The right attitude to adopt towards those claiming to be prophets.

2. THE BIBLE TESTS OF A PROPHET.

(a) General Tests

- (1) 1 John 4: 2, 3. Belief that Jesus is the Messiah and has come in human flesh.
- (2) Isaiah 8: 19, 20. Harmony with the Scriptures.
- (3) Deuteronomy 18:21,22. Truthful predictions.
- (4) Matthew 7: 15-20. The character of the prophet.

(b) Physical Tests-governing the prophet when in vision.

- (1) Daniel 10: 8. All human strength departs.
- (2) Daniel 10: 17. No breath in the body.
- (3) Daniel 10: 18. Supernatural strength given.
- (4) Numbers 24: 2-4, 15,16. Eyes open.
- (5) 2 Corinthians 12: 1-4. Unconscious of earthly surroundings.

3. Seventh-day Adventists believe that they constitute the remnant church of Revelation 12:17 because they keep the commandments of God. This claim cannot be justified, however, unless they also "have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12: 17), which is declared to be the "Spirit of prophecy." (Revelation 9: 10.) These Scriptures clearly indicate that there will be a prophet in the remnant church. Seventh-day Adventists believe that from the commencement of the time when the Sabbath truth was discovered (1844), the Lord has restored the gift of prophecy in His church, and that this gift was manifested in the person of Mrs. Ellen Gould White, formerly Miss Harmon. It is believed that her life and work stand every test that can be brought to bear upon them, and, therefore, if one is to be true to the Bible instruction "Despise not prophesyings.... Hold fast that which is good," one must regard Mrs. White as God's instrument who has brought special instruction which He wishes to convey to the people of the remnant church.

4. Let us now apply the Bible tests to Mrs. White.

(a) Moral Tests. Mrs. White's writings bear abundant testimony that she believed in Christ as the incarnate Son of God, that her teachings are in harmony with the Bible as a whole. Perhaps the best proof to the genuineness of her claims is in the influence her writings exert upon those who believe them.

Read the testimony of D. M. Canright as to the influence of Mrs. White's life on his own, quoted in "Great Second Advent Movement" (J. N. Loughborough), pages 304, 305.

As to the truthfulness of Mrs. White's predictions, it would take a large volume to relate the fulfillment of her words. Pastor F. C. Gilbert has written a book of 456 pages, entitled "Divine Predictions Fulfilled," in which are recorded numerous incidents of fulfillment. Surely this should make one realize that God has spoken through her ministry. Read "Great Second Advent Movement," pages 322-342.

(b) Physical Tests. On Mrs. White's condition while in vision, read "Great Second Advent Movement," pages 204-211.

MEMORIZE: 1 Thessalonians 5: 20, 21.

Questions on the lesson

1. Why is there special need for testing the claims of one who claims to be a prophet?
2. What should be our attitude toward prophetic gifts?
3. Outline the Bible tests of a true prophet, giving Scripture references for each.
4. How only can Sabbath-keepers justify their claim to be the remnant church?
5. Why do Seventh-day Adventists believe that Mrs. E. G. White was possessed of the prophetic gift?
6. Show that Mrs. E. G. White meets the Scriptural specifications for a true prophet.

For Further Study

Read "Life Sketches," "Testimonies," Vol. 1, pages 9-112; Vol. V, pages 654-691.