

PROPHETS, PROPHECY, VISIONS, AND DREAMS

Lecture 18 by

Victor A. Gill

www.AmazingDiscoveries.org

INTRODUCTION

- A. Jesus predicted that false prophets would rise in the last days.
- B. If there are false prophets in these last days, there must be a genuine, authentic manifestation of the gift of prophecy also.
- C. John, the Revelator, predicted that the end-time church would keep the commandments and have the gift of prophecy.

DOES THE BIBLE PREDICT THE MANIFESTATION OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY IN THE END-TIME?

Matthew 24:24 - Jesus predicted that false prophets would rise in the last days.

Matthew 7:15 - We are warned against false prophets in sheep's clothing.

Ephesians 4:8, 11-15 - The gift of prophecy was one of the gifts given to the people of God after Jesus ascended into heaven.

Ephesians 4:12 - The gifts were given to perfect a people and prepare a church for the coming of Jesus.

Ephesians 4:13 - The gift of prophecy will remain in God's church, until we all come into the unity of the faith.

I Corinthians 1:7 - The church was to come behind in no gift while the people waited for the Lord to come.

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PROPHETIC GIFT

Isaiah 59:2 - Sin separates us from God. So God is not able to communicate with us face to face.

Numbers 12:6 - The Lord will speak to a prophet through visions and dreams.

The Bible describes prophets as receiving messages from God in two ways:

1. Angels brought them visions and dreams. (Revelation 1:1)
2. The Holy Spirit impressed their minds, revealing heaven's truth to them. (2 Peter 1:19-21)

There are two kinds of prophetic revelations:

1. Written revelations such as those of Moses, Daniel, and John.
2. Those writings that have not been preserved or are oral presentations. Enoch, Elijah, and Elisha, who did not contribute to writing the Bible, are still certainly prophets in the Biblical sense.

Acts 11:27 - Agabus was a prophet that went to Antioch and predicted a great famine throughout the world. He was a prophet, but there is no book in the Bible called Agabus.

I Corinthians 12:28 - God has placed prophets in His true church.

THE PROPHETIC GIFT IN THE REMNANT CHURCH

Revelation 12:17 - Satan is at war with the church that keeps the commandments of God and has the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Ezekiel 7:26 - If the people and priests neglect to keep God's law, the counsel, which would come through the prophets, would also cease.

Lamentations 2:9 - God will not speak through a prophet to any church movement that disregards His law.

MANIFESTATION OF THE TRUE PROPHETIC GIFT

The greatest religious movement of modern times was the Advent movement of 1844. As the 2300-day prophecy came to an end, thousands expected their Lord to return. Men and women of all faiths and denominations united on this common belief. Through the preaching of William Miller, many were converted, and each joined the church of his choice. But because of the attitude of the religious leaders toward the Advent cause, they were unable to remain there.

According to J.N. Loughborough, "More than 50,000 church members voluntarily left the religious bodies...and identified themselves with William Miller and his associates...Thousands were excommunicated from their churches for believing the doctrine of the near coming of the Lord". *Divine Predictions Fulfilled* p. 73.

In December of 1844, while this work of expulsion was going on, seventeen year old Ellen Harmon, later to become Mrs. Ellen G. White, was given a vision of these Advent people traveling an elevated road to heaven with a brilliant light illuminating the pathway. This was a great encouragement to the Advent believers.

From 1844 to 1915, Ellen G. White was given more than 2,000 prophetic visions and dreams, wrote more than 50 books, and lectured to tens of thousands.

George Whorton James wrote in his book, *California, Beautiful and Romantic*, "This remarkable woman, though almost entirely self-educated, has written and published more books in more languages which circulate to the greater extent than any other woman in history." (p. 319)

I. PROPHETIC ACCURACY

In prophecies that are not conditional, the prophet of God is 100% accurate.

Jeremiah 28:9 - The accuracy with which a prophecy is fulfilled tells us whether God has sent that prophet.

Ralph Blodgett, in an article in *Theses Times* magazine, wrote that of all the predictions of leading psychics at the beginning of a given year, only 16% of them were accurate. What about Ellen White? Let's look at a few predictions.

HEALTH

Almost 70 years before the Surgeon General's report on smoking and health she warned, "Tobacco is a slow, insidious, but most malignant poison". *Ministry of Healing*, p. 327. It was not until 1964 that the Surgeon General linked cancer and tobacco.

RELIGION

Today, spiritualism is sweeping the world. It has leaped across denominational boundaries, and to some, it appears as a great world power to unite all religions. "I saw that the mysterious knocking in New York...was the power of Satan, and that such things would be more and more common, clothed in a religious garb so as to lull the deceiver to greater security." *Early Writings*. p. 43.

NATURAL DISASTERS

In a startling prediction, she forecast that San Francisco would receive the judgments of God because of its sin. God revealed to her that it had become so corrupt that it was ripe for destruction. On April 18, 1906, four years after the prediction, the great San Francisco earthquake took place.

II. THE PROPHET'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE BIBLE

Deuteronomy 13:1-4 - One of the great tests of the true gift of prophecy is whether or not the prophet's life and teachings are in harmony with the Scriptures.

In *The Great Controversy*, pages 204 and 205, she wrote, "In our time there is a wide departure from their doctrines and precepts, and there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle — the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty". Her writings complemented the Bible.

III. THE PROPHET'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE LAW OF GOD

Isaiah 8:20 - A true prophet of God exalts the law of God and calls men to obedience.

For more than 70 years, Ellen White called men back to obedience to all Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath. There may be some truth in what a so-called prophet who disregards the law says. What false prophets predict may even have a semblance of accuracy, but they have no light, and since light is what we follow, we must turn away from any prophet or movement that does not exalt the law.

IV. THE PROPHET'S RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST

Revelation 19:10 - Since the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus Christ and a true prophet is a witness for Christ, we can expect that the central focus of the prophet's ministry would be exalting Christ.

Back in 1946, W.E. Bemont, who at the time was an official in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., was asked which book in the vast library on the life of Christ he felt most outstanding. His answer, "My preference or choice would be guided by what I wish to get from the book or books to be read, but let me put it this way: I would put *The Desire of Ages*, by Ellen White, first for spiritual discernment and practical application".

In her book *Gospel Workers*, she wrote, "Lift up Jesus, you that teach the people, lift Him up in sermon, in song, in prayer. Let all your powers be directed in pointing souls, confused, bewildered, lost, to "the Lamb of God". (p. 160)

V. PHYSICAL TESTS

God has placed tests in His Word to distinguish the true from the false. There are certain physical criteria to evaluate the genuine gift. Here they are:

1. The prophet enters vision with his eyes open and has his eyes open throughout the vision. (Numbers 24:4)
2. In vision, the prophet has no strength, but later receives strength from above. (Daniel 10:8)
3. He also does not breathe. (Daniel 10:17)

The physical phenomena surrounding Ellen White's visions indicate that they were supernatural.

VI. SPIRITUAL FRUITAGE

As a result of the counsel of God through Ellen G. White, Seventh-day Adventists have established 200 hospitals and clinics throughout the world. In a little more than 100 years, our work has grown till we are now operating in more lands and tongues than any other Protestant denomination. The sun never sets on the work of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

APPEAL

God is working in marvelous ways to lead men and women to His true church. You have been divinely guided to these meetings. Some of you have been searching for the truth for years. Let us not forget the words of Revelation 14:12 — “Here are the patience of the saints. Here are they that keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus!” Can this be said of you?

APPENDIX

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God,

I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh:

and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

and your younger men shall see visions,

and your older men shall dream dreams:

And on my servants, and on my hand-maidens,

I will pour out in those days of my Spirit

and they shall prophesy:

And I will shew wonders in heaven above,

and signs in the earth beneath;

blood and fire and vapour of smoke.

The sun shall be turned into darkness,

and the moon into blood,

before that great and notable day of the Lord come.”

Acts 2:17-20

When the day of Pentecost was fully come and the disciples were all with one accord in one place, filled with the Holy Ghost, Peter, standing up with the eleven, quoted the above scripture from the prophesy of Joel. His objective was to show that the marvelous work which was wrought in the disciples at that time was a subject of prophesy and the work of God. Would anyone take the position that all the prophesy of Joel quoted by Peter was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost? There is no evidence to indicate that, except for that part which related to the pouring out of the Holy Ghost. We cannot believe that the signs in the sun and moon etc. were seen on that day, or that there were many having visions, or dreaming dreams among them at that exciting hour. There is no proof of this happening.

A part of this prophesy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, and all of it is to be fulfilled "IN THE LAST DAYS, SAITH GOD". Dreams and visions are among the signs of that preceded the great and notable day of the Lord. And as the signs of that day have been, and still are fulfilling, it must be clear to every candid mind that the time has fully come, when the children of God may expect dreams and visions from the Lord.

This may not be a very popular position to hold on this subject, but we must choose to believe the word of the Lord on this point, rather than the teachings of men. The prejudice on the subject is caused principally by the lack of the correct view on this subject. Let us bear in mind that these dreams and visions are to be in the "LAST DAYS". As there cannot be any days later than the last, it is certain that we may expect just such revelations, until Christ appears in the clouds of heaven. The "last days" (did not end with the book of Revelation written in AD 96 by the apostle John. The prophecies of which he wrote extended far into the future from his day.

The Bible is a perfect and complete revelation. It is our only rule of faith and practice. But this is no reason why God may not show the past, present and future fulfillment of His word in these last days by dreams and visions. This is in accordance with Peter's testimony given on the day of Pentecost. True visions are given to lead us to God and His written word; but those that are given for a new rule of faith and practice in contradiction of the Bible cannot be from God, and should be rejected.

The only wise and safe course to follow in this matter is pointed out in the following passages of scripture. Let all who read these things give heed to its important counsel.

"Despise not prophesying.

Prove all things;

hold fast that which is good."

I Thessalonians 5:20, 21

"To the law and to the testimony,

if they speak not according to this word,

it is because there is no light in them."

Isaiah 8:20