

1. **Revelation's Spirit of Prophecy: The True and the False**

A few years ago, there was a pastor and his wife who had an interesting experience with someone who claimed to have the gift of prophecy. And it's an experience they would never forget. It happened like this. He was pastoring a church district in western Pennsylvania, in a small town called Charleroi (shar-la-roy). They were holding a prophecy seminar very similar to this one, in the lower level of the local library, and it was open to the whole community.



2. Well, one afternoon the pastor got a phone call at home from a man who claimed to be a seeker after truth. The man on the phone told him that he lived just across the state line in Ohio. He had heard about the meetings, was interested in attending, but didn't know where the library was.



3. So, the pastor told him he could meet him at his house and ride with his wife and him to the meeting. But when the pastor said that his wife was frantically motioning, "No, no," from the other side of the room. She didn't like the idea of giving their address to a total stranger. She did not have a good feeling about this.



4. So instead, the pastor gave the man the address to the church and told him to meet them there. And that's just what happened. The man rode with the pastor and his wife to the library for the seminar. At first, everything seemed to be okay. But as the man sat in the meeting that night he started to get irritated and agitated. He started shaking his head and saying out loud, *"No, no."* The pastor could see that the man didn't like what he was preaching, and he was becoming unruly.



5. So, the pastor prayed a silent prayer: *"Lord, just please keep him silent. Don't let him disturb the meeting. Just hold him down until afterwards."* God answered that prayer. The man didn't disturb the meeting anymore, but the ride home was a very interesting and tense one for the pastor and his wife.



6. During the ride home, the man was sitting in the back seat. The pastor's wife was driving and the pastor was on the passenger side. As he looked into the rear-view mirror, he noticed the man had taken the hoodie he was wearing and put it up over his head so that his face could not be seen. Since it was nighttime outside, looking in the rear-view mirror at a hoodie with no face in it was like looking at the grim reaper in the back seat. Needless to say, it was a bit unsettling.



7. Then all of a sudden the man in the back seat started arguing with the pastor. He was upset about some of the things the pastor said in the seminar. He began ranting and raving, trying to quote various Bible verses. The pastor tried to politely explain things to him and share with him what the Bible said and just be very calm about it, but the man would have none of it.



8. It seemed like the more the pastor said, the more upset the man in the back seat got. Now, I don't know if you've ever been in a conversation where the person keeps going on and on and they're getting more intense and you can't get any words in, but that's what it was like. He was getting really hyped up.



9. Now the pastor was beginning to wonder what spirit was in the back seat. It was as though the man had 50 cups of coffee and just would not stop. Eventually the man reached up and put his hands on the front seat where the pastor's wife was driving and began shaking the seat as he spoke. His hands were not far from her neck. That was a little too close for comfort and now they were getting nervous.



10. As they shared with him some things from the Bible and tried to respond to his comments, the man finally looked at the pastor and said something he'll never forget. "You can't tell me anything I don't already know." The shocked pastor said, "Sir, please be careful. The Holy Spirit is always willing to lead us into truth that perhaps we didn't know before." But the man in the back seat replied, "I know everything. You can't tell me anything I don't already know." Then he announced, "I've got to tell you something. I'm a prophet. And I've been sent by God to tell you that you're wrong."



11. Well, that got the pastor's attention. Wouldn't it get yours? Now the pastor knew he was not perfect and he was open to being shown if he was wrong about something. I think we all ought to have a spirit like that.



12. Now, the gift of prophecy is one of the spiritual gifts mentioned in the Bible. But it also warns us of the false manifestation of prophecy. And the pastor already had some red flags going up in my mind with this gentleman. Number one, he was quoting things from the Bible out of context that weren't true. Number two, he lied to the pastor. He said that he was a seeker after truth when it turns out all he wanted to do was cause trouble. The pastor found out later on that he did this with other ministers in the area.



13. So the pastor said to him, *"Okay, so you say you're a prophet? Can you tell me where you go to church?"* He answered, *"I don't go to church."* The pastor thought to himself, *"Let me get this straight. You're a prophet. I can't tell you anything you don't already know. You lied to me. And you don't go to church and worship anywhere?"*



14. Now, he didn't say that out loud because he didn't want the man to go ballistic and explode. But those red flags were looming large in his mind. So finally, he and his wife decided, *"You know what? This isn't going anywhere. We just better not say anything more. We'll just let him talk. We don't want to ramp him up."* When they finally got to the church where the man's car was parked, they thanked him for coming and waited for him to get out of the car.



15. The man opened the back seat of the car, one foot stepped out onto the parking lot pavement and the other foot remained inside the car. He stayed like that for a few seconds with half his body in and half his body out. Then he brought his other foot back in the car, shut the car door, and continued his ranting and raving, getting more and more out of control.



16. The pastor and his wife looked at each other and concluded, *"We're saying nothing more. We're going to sit here and we're going to pray silently until this man gets out of the car."*

After what seemed like forever, the man realized he wasn't going to get anywhere. He opened the door, stepped out, got into his car, and drove away. Needless to say, it was a quiet ride home for the pastor and his wife that night. After what they witnessed, they couldn't help but wonder what spirit was in the back seat of their car.



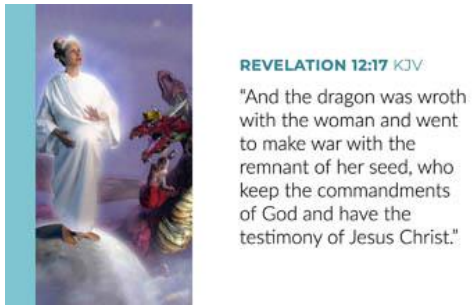
17. Because of that experience, as you can imagine, they've been very leery of people who claim to have the gift of prophecy or who claim to have a message from heaven. Some of you may have had similar experiences. There's some crazy people out there. But at the same time, the Bible says there is a true gift of prophecy that is meant to encourage and to bless God's people. So, what we need to do tonight is to understand how to tell the difference between the true and the false.



18. How do we know who has a message from God and who doesn't? How do we know what the genuine gift of prophecy looks like? And how do we know what the counterfeit manifestation of prophecy looks like? We're going to study those principles tonight, my friends.



19. I want to begin by taking us back to a verse that we looked at last night and a few nights before. Let's take a look at Revelation 12:17 again, because we're going to study something in that verse we have not looked at the past few nights. This verse describes God's people in the last days.



20. The Bible says, *"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and he went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."*



21. Now, we've studied that a few times in this seminar and we understood that Revelation was telling us in the last days there would be one final remnant movement that would draw people back to the Bible and all the commandments of God. It would be a last day movement where people from all different faiths and denominations would come together to study truth.

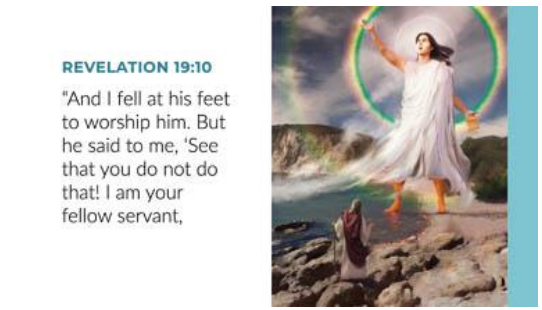


22. Revelation described that remnant movement in two specific ways. Number one, they keep the commandments of God, that is the Ten Commandments. This includes the Sabbath. Number two, it also says they have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Now, what does that mean? We haven't studied that phrase yet in this seminar, but it's pretty important.



23. If God's last day remnant church is described as those who keep the commandments of God, but also those who have the testimony of Jesus, then we need to know what the "testimony of Jesus" is? What does that phrase mean? It means more than simply having the teachings of Jesus.

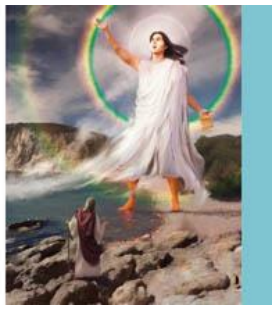
Now we could stand here all night and guess and speculate, but fortunately Revelation gives us a very clear definition as to what that phrase means.



24. Let's go to Revelation 19:10. Here's what the angel of the vision says to John. The Bible says, *"And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, 'See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant,*

REVELATION 19:10

and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'"

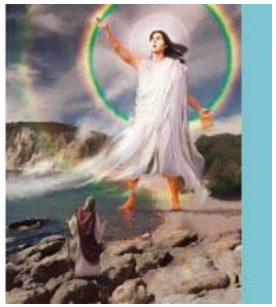


25. *and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'"*

In other words, the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, or that is the gift of prophecy. To have the testimony of Jesus means that a person testifies for Jesus and has the gift of prophecy. Someone with the spirit or gift of prophecy is a messenger for God.

REVELATION 19:10

"And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, 'See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant,



26. He or she delivers messages from God to the people of the earth or to the church. They are a spokesperson for God. Some call such a person a prophet. Others just simply call them a messenger. But what we know is if someone has the testimony of Jesus, they speak for God. You see that all the way through the Bible. There were prophets in the Old Testament like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Elijah, and Elisha. You even see prophets in the New Testament. We will study that in just a few minutes.



27. But here's the issue. If there is a true gift of prophecy, and if Revelation says that God's last day people will exhibit that true gift of prophecy, then is there also a false manifestation of prophecy which is meant to deceive? The answer is yes. There is a true gift of prophecy that is meant to guide, bless, and instruct God's people in certain situations, and there is a false prophecy which is meant to deceive and confuse.



28. So, if the devil has a bunch of counterfeits, how can I know the difference between the true and the false? You can bet on it that if God has the genuine gift, the devil is going to try to counteract that with all kinds of counterfeit prophesying that we will find in the world today.



29. In fact, what you're going to discover is that prophesying today is a multimillion-dollar business in the 21st century. Take a look at the screen. It's probably nothing new to you, but did you know there is an explosion of interest in psychic phenomena today? That's basically what we would call modern prophesying. In over 2,000 newspapers throughout this country, you can find prophetic columns or what would be called daily horoscopes based on astrology where they will give you advice for what you should or should not do that day. Many people actually make their decisions based on that.



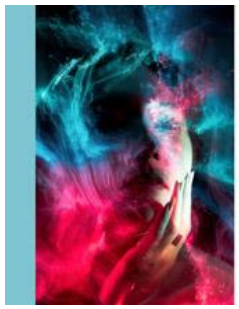
30. You can call a 1-900 number and talk to the Psychic Network, or access numerous websites where a spiritist will gladly give you advice for your life. You can go somewhere and have your palm read, look into a crystal ball, use tarot cards, or be involved in seances where a medium will channel someone who has died from the past. You've seen these before, I'm sure, especially on late-night TV commercials. If there is this much interest in modern prophesying today, you know the devil has been trying hard to lead people astray because all these things have many adherents and net millions of dollars in our world.



31. So that leads us back to our original question—how can we tell the difference between the true and the false? We're going to take a look at some of the explicit warnings God gives us about the false manifestation of prophecy.



32. Let's start with the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:24, where the Bible says, *"For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."*



MATTHEW 24:24

"For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."

33. We've studied that even false christs and false prophets can do wondrous signs and miraculous things. This is extremely important to understand. The book of Revelation warns us that the spirits of demons would be released into this world that can also do signs and wonders.

REVELATION 16:14

"For they are the spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty."



34. Notice what it says in Revelation 16:14. The Bible says, *"For they are the spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty."*

REVELATION 16:14

"For they are the spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty."



35. The devil knows that the human race is awed by signs and wonders. So often when we see something that is miraculous, we want to follow it. We assume that person, that group, that church must be of God, because look at all these wondrous things they do. People will follow miracles instead of following what the Word of God actually says. The devil knows this.

REVELATION 16:14

"For they are the spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty."



36. If people think someone can do miracles, they will likely listen to everything he has to say. This is why Revelation indicates that false signs and wonders will ramp up in the last days. The devil is intent on deceiving as many as he can. That's why Jesus warned us about these things long ago.



I JOHN 4:1

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

37. There's another pertinent warning in 1 John 4:1. The Bible says, *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."*



I JOHN 4:1

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

38. That's some advice worth listening to. If you put it in modern vernacular, the Bible is saying, *"Listen, don't believe everything you hear. Don't believe every Tom, Dick and Harry that comes along and says, 'Hey, I've got the true gift of prophecy. I've got a message from heaven. I've had a vision or a dream.'"*



I JOHN 4:1

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

39. Test the spirits, it says. But how do you actually do that? We'll talk about that in a moment. But just because there are false prophets, we want to make sure we don't reject the true gift of prophecy either.



I THESSALONIANS 5:19

"Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good."

40. Paul said something very similar in the book of 1 Thessalonians. Let's take a look at that in 1 Thessalonians 5:19. The Bible says, *"Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good."*



41. So, one verse says, don't believe everything you hear, and now the next text says, don't quench the Spirit. Don't throw away all prophecies. Don't throw the baby out with the bath water.



42. That's good advice. But unfortunately, you see two extremes that are in the world today. One extreme says, *"I'm not going to believe anybody that says they have a message from God. They're all nuts! "* But when I take that attitude, I'm going to miss the blessings of the genuine gift that God may give. But then the other extreme is saying, *"I'll believe anything I hear. I'll accept every sign and wonder as being from God without testing it."* That leaves us open to being deceived.



43. So these verses tell us five things. Beware of false prophets. Test the spirits. We are encouraged to test all things. Hold on to that which is good. And don't despise the genuine gift of prophecy.



44. When you think about it, it's a bit like dating. You're trying to find the right person. You let go of the bad ones and you choose to keep the good one. Hopefully that's the one you marry and spend the rest of your life with.



45. So, what we need to do now is discover the principles God gives us to test the spirits. The wonderful thing is that the Bible gives us three major ways to test the spirits so that we can tell the difference between the true gift of prophecy and false prophecy. These tests are so clear, so simple, so easy to understand that I believe a child could understand them. That's what I love about the Bible. It is so profound, so life changing, but yet it is so simple that all age groups can comprehend it.



46. So, let's take a look at these three principles. All three of them are things that I can not only apply to the gift of prophecy, but I can apply it to other areas, like testing teachers or preachers. Just because a teacher seems knowledgeable doesn't mean that he or she has the true gift of prophecy. Just because a church is the biggest in town and does seemingly miraculous things does not mean that it's sharing the truth. Just because someone says they have a vision or a dream or a message from God, doesn't necessarily mean they're leading us down the right path.



47. So let's start with test number one, which is found in Numbers 12:6. The Bible says, *"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."*



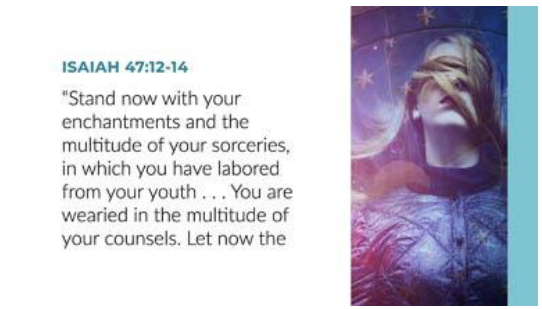
48. Now, friends, this is very important because right here, God lays out the mode of communication with which He talks to His true prophets. God speaks to His prophets through visions and dreams. Please notice, God does not speak through tarot cards, crystal balls, seances, palm reading, astrology, or new age psychic practices.



49. God says, *"If there is a prophet among you, I will speak to him and deliver the message in visions and dreams."* So, test number one does away with many who claim to be modern prophets today who get their information from other channels of communication which God does not sanction.



50. In fact, in the book of Isaiah, God condemns many of these other channels of communication and other psychic or spiritualistic practices because of where they come from.



51. Let's take a look at some strong words God spoke in Isaiah 47:12. The Bible says, and God is speaking to Israel here, *"Stand now with your enchantments and the multitude of your sorceries in which you have labored from your youth … You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels. Let now the*



52. *astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you. Behold, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them."*

Did you catch that? God specifically says have nothing to do with all these other methods. Israel was getting involved in many of the pagan practices that came from Babylon.

ISAIAH 47:12-14

astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you. Behold, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them."



53. Instead of listening to His prophets, to whom He speaks in visions and dreams, they're going off to star gazers and monthly prognosticators, who are basically ancient psychics, mediums, and astrologists. God says, *"If you want to reject My Word and follow these other methods, go ahead. See what they tell you. But they can't save you. In fact, it's a road that leads straight to hell."*

ISAIAH 47:12-14

astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you. Behold, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them."



54. You say, *"Wow, that's pretty strong language."* Yes, it is. But think about it. If I'm messing around with these other spiritualistic and psychic practices, if I am dabbling in these other forms of spiritual communication, then I am connecting myself to the dark side. I'm connecting myself to the demonic world and I am on dangerous ground. That's why God says have nothing to do with it and He doesn't mince words about it. He warns us these practices come from the pit of hell. When you engage in them, you are opening yourself up to the enemy.

ISAIAH 47:12-14

astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you. Behold, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them."



55. You can drive anywhere in most cities and see advertisements for psychics, palm reading, tarot cards, and all sorts of different things. Someone might be tempted to say, *"I tried it once. I called the 900 number just to see, and in the beginning, they gave me some good advice and some of the things they said actually took place."*

ISAIAH 47:12-14

astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you. Behold, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them."



56. The devil is no fool. He's not going to make something look so terrible, so bad, and so scary that you run away from it immediately. Even the devil knows what the Bible says. The devil can know what the future holds. The devil watches our lives. He knows the patterns of the way we think and our actions. He can have a pretty decent idea of how were going to handle things based on the past. Unless of course we've been born again through Jesus.

ISAIAH 47:12-14

astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you. Behold, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them."



57. So, many times these other methods can give ambiguous prophecies that seem to come true. But what happens then when you get sucked in far enough, and you finally realize where you are and who has a hold of you, then you find you can't get out? It's like these credit card teaser rates. You know what I mean? I get them in the mail every day, 0% APR for 18 months. So, you transfer all your balances over, you buy a bunch of things and then the 18 months are over and now it's 22% and you are stuck because you've already bought all these things and transferred your balances.

ISAIAH 47:12-14

astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you. Behold, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them."



58. Or worse yet, it's like a man that a woman has started dating. He seems so kind, so nice, so handsome. He says the right things. His manners are exquisite. He seems so perfect, almost too good to be true. She begins falling for him, until she finds out he's an abuser and his true colors begin to show. But she has a hard time getting out of the relationship. That how these spiritualistic practices are. They look good on the outside, but things are not as they appear.

ISAIAH 47:12-14

astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you. Behold, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them."



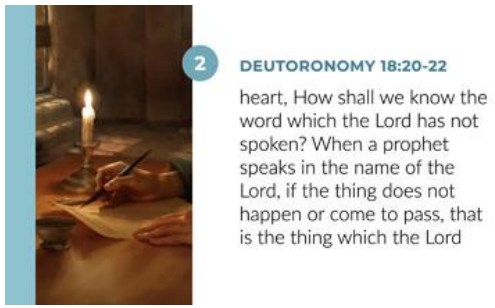
59. God says, *"Stay away from these spiritualistic and psychic practices. I speak to my prophets through visions and dreams." That's how the genuine gift of prophecy is exhibited."*



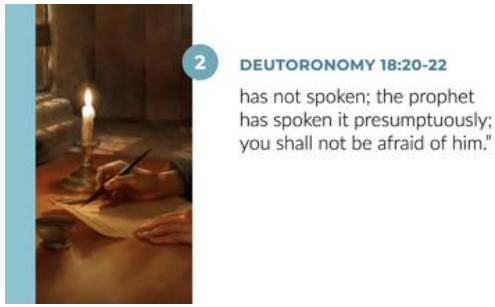
2 DEUTORONOMY 18:20-22

"But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And if you say in your

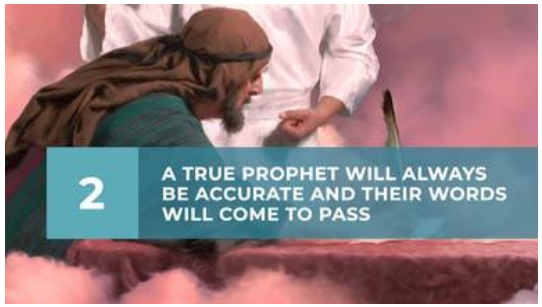
60. But now let's go to test number two. Let's take a look at this in Deuteronomy 18:20-22. The Bible says, *"And if you say in your*



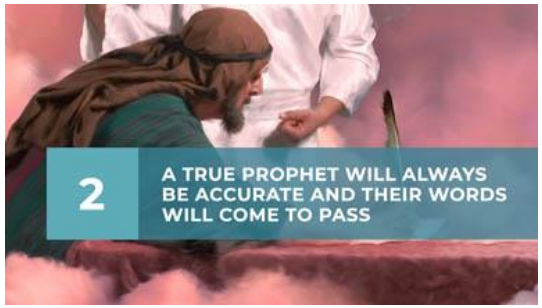
61. *heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord*



62. *has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him."*



63. Here is test number two: A true prophet will always be accurate. Their words will come to pass. Why? Because they are not giving their own opinion. It is God speaking, and God cannot be wrong. In fact, here in Deuteronomy, the people are saying to God, *"Look, how are we supposed to know if a prophet is from you or not?"* And God is telling them, *"If what the prophet says does not come to pass, if his word is not fulfilled, he is not speaking for Me. You shall not be afraid of him. You shall not listen to him."*



64. When you think about it, that makes a lot of sense. If they're not giving their opinions, if they're not giving their own interpretations, a true prophet is simply relaying messages from God. So, can God be wrong? Of course not. So, if they're relaying messages from God, and God cannot be wrong, they must be accurate in what they say. If they do predict or prophesy something, it must come to pass or they're not from God. Does that make sense?



65. In fact, test number 2 rejects many modern prophets today. People like Edgar Cayce, Nostradamus, and so many others. Though they were right a few times, they were also wrong more times. Are we willing to say that if someone is 50% accurate, they're from God? Then we have to say that God was wrong the other 50% of the time.



66. One example of someone that we've all heard of, and I mean this in the utmost respect, is a woman by the name of Jeane Dixon. Jeane Dixon has passed away now, but she was a prolific, well-known psychic who claimed to communicate through telepathy. Taking some of Jeane Dixon's predictions and prophecies through the years, someone estimated she was right about 30 to 60% of the time. You may say, *"That's a pretty big gap. How come 30 to 60%?"*



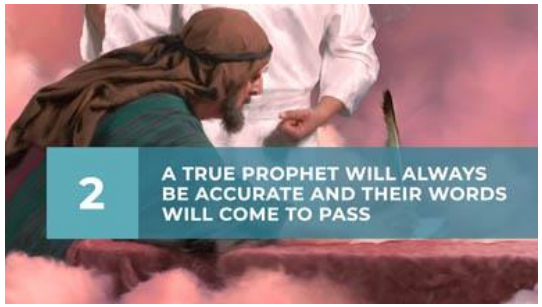
67. Well, sometimes these modern prophets have prophecies that are so ambiguous and vague. They can fit almost anything. So just giving her the full benefit of the doubt, let's say she was right 60% of the time. If that's the genuine gift of prophecy, what would that be saying? That would be saying that God was wrong the other 40% of the time. Because if they're speaking for God, it's not the prophet's words. It's God's message. Am I willing to say that God was wrong 40% of the time? Not according to this principle.



68. I don't know if you've ever gone through the line at Walmart in December at the end of the year. You see all those magazines in the racks, like Star Magazine, The Globe, and other publications from the entertainment world. They usually have an end-of-the-year issue with all the prophetic predictions of what's going to happen in the new year to come. So, there was a Christian magazine that decided to test these prophecies to see how many of them actually came to pass a year later. You know what they discovered? About 16% of the prophecies came true. The average accuracy was 16%.



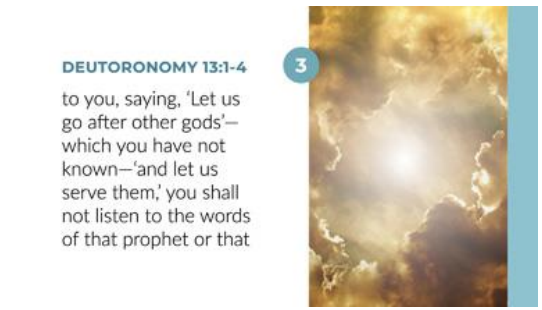
69. Now, friends, I don't know about you, but I think I could do that well just guessing and speculating. If I'm going to say that they were from God, then I would have to say God was wrong 84% of the time. And you see my friends, God cannot be wrong.



70. So, test number two, if they're speaking for God and delivering His message, they must be accurate in what they say, and it must come to pass.



71. Test number three is also found in the book of Deuteronomy. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 13, beginning at verse one, *"If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass of which he spoke*



72. *to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'—which you have not known—'and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that*



73. *dreamer of dreams ... You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice."*



74. Now, let's pause. There's a very important principle here. God gives the example of someone who gets their information from visons and dreams, and what they say actually comes to pass. In other words, they fulfill the first two tests. But what they say contradicts the revealed Word of God. In the case of this passage, they said, *"Let us go after other gods that we do not know."*



75. God says, don't listen to them. Don't follow them. It doesn't matter if they fulfill the first two tests. If they say things that contradict the Word of God, or they lead us in directions that are contrary to what the revealed Scriptures say, God says, *"Don't listen to them. They are not from Him."*



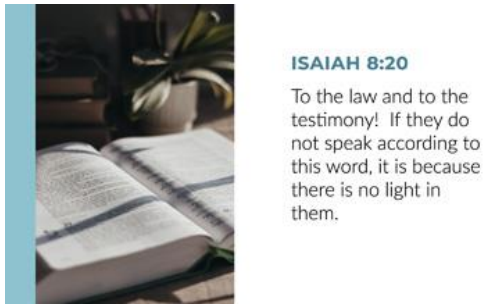
76. That is such an important point to understand that I'm going to repeat it. It doesn't matter if they get their messages through visions and dreams. It doesn't matter if what they say comes to pass. If they contradict the Bible, do not listen to them.



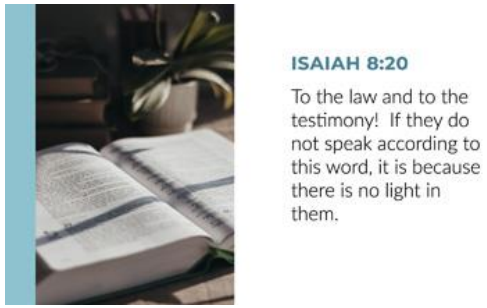
77. When you think about it, who inspired the messages of Scripture? The Holy Spirit. And if someone has the true gift of prophecy, who's speaking through them? The Holy Spirit. So why would the Holy Spirit contradict Himself by causing that so-called prophet to say things that are not in harmony with the Word of God? God's not going to contradict Himself.



78. So, test number three says, a true prophet will always agree with the Word and God and never contradict it.



79. In addition to this, God gives us a very powerful principle in Isaiah 8:20. The Bible says, "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Now, there in Isaiah, the prophet was specifically speaking of channelers and mediums and those who talk to the dead. Isaiah is telling Israel, "Listen, there is no light in this, have nothing to do with them." But we can also apply that principle to the gift of prophecy as well. If they do not speak according to this Word, the Bible, God says, we need not listen to them. There is no light in what they say.



80. Aren't you thankful that God loves us enough to give us these guiding principles, so we are not lead astray? Even though the last days may be a confusing time, even though there will be false christs and false prophets, He gives us three simple, easy-to-understand tests that just make sense.



81. So, let's review these three principles. Number one, a true prophet receives their messages through visions and dreams. Number two, a true prophet will always be accurate, and their words will come to pass because they're speaking for God, not themselves. And number three, a true prophet will always agree with the Word of God and never contradict it.



82. Another thing a true prophet may do is point out the sins of God's people and provide counsel and guidance to them. Now, I don't know about you, but most people are not jumping up and down to want to be a prophet. You know how in school when the teacher says, "I need a volunteer from the class," what are all the elementary kids doing?



83. They're jumping up and down saying, "Ooh, pick me, pick me" Well that's not true of a prophet. Nobody is standing up saying, "Ooh, pick me to be a prophet. Pick me to be a prophet." Do you know why that is? Because nobody likes a prophet.



84. Have you noticed how people with the true gift of prophecy were treated by God's own people sometimes? Elijah had to hide in the wilderness for three and a half years because they wanted to kill him. They threw Jeremiah in a pit. They beheaded John the Baptist. Many times, those who have the true gift have to deliver messages that cut to the heart.



85. They have to say things they really don't want to say because they know it's a blatant message that's going to tick somebody off. So, most people are not saying, *"Oh God, please make me be a prophet."* Most people aren't volunteering for this.



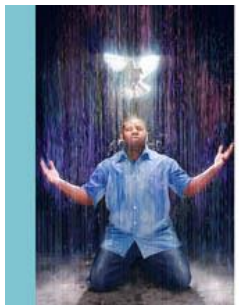
86. There's something else to keep in mind. Just because someone has the gift of prophecy, doesn't mean they always predict things. There are many prophets in the Bible who never predicted anything. God will choose some people to give counsel and guidance to God's people for very specific situations, like Elijah gave counsel to Israel for his time and for his place. So did John the Baptist. In fact, when you think about it, who is the greatest prophet of the New Testament?



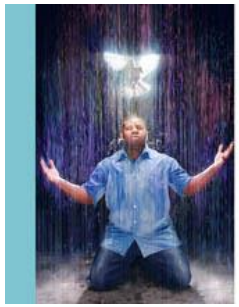
87. John the Baptist. Jesus said no one was greater than John the Baptist. But do you realize he never wrote one single word of Scripture? Not one. Oh, he was quoted by the Bible writers, but he never wrote a word of Scripture. So being a prophet doesn't mean you have to be an author or writer of the Bible. It doesn't mean you have to necessarily predict things, but you're a spokesperson for God.



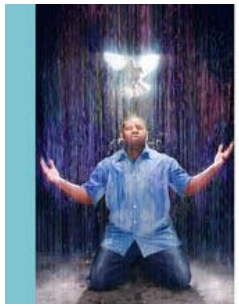
88. So that leads us to another question. We know there were prophets in the Old Testament—but were there prophets in the New Testament?



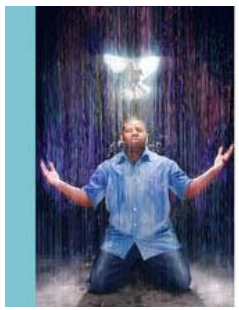
89. Well, let's take a look at Joel 2:28, something that was written near the end of the Old Testament period. The Bible says, *"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams,*



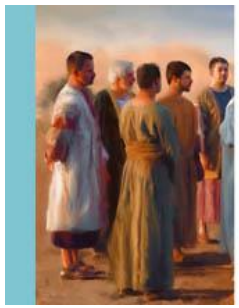
90. *your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days."*



91. Joel, one of the prophets, is looking into New Testament times and even into the last days. He says there will be times when God's going to pour out His Spirit on His people, and He will not discriminate on men and women, on young and old, and on His men servants and His maid servants. Joel was telling us this would happen in the future.



92. If that's true, then shouldn't we find prophets in the New Testament? The answer is, indeed, we do. They may not be as prolific and front and center as the prophets of the Old Testament, but they're there.



ACTS 13:1-3

"Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene,

93. Let me just show you two examples from Scripture and then we're going to talk about prophets in the last days. If you take a look at Acts 13:1, I want to read you something that was happening in a local church at Antioch. The Bible says, *"Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene,*



ACTS 13:1-3

Manaen. . . and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for

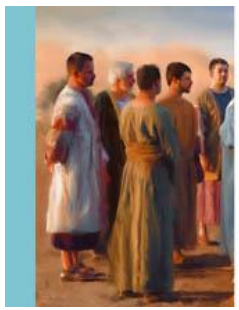
94. *Manaen. . . and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for*



ACTS 13:1-3

the work to which I have called them.' Then having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away."

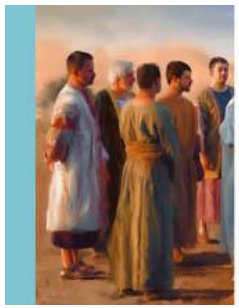
95. *the work to which I have called them.' Then having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away."*



ACTS 13:1-3

the work to which I have called them.' Then having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away."

96. Look at this. A body of believers in Antioch, a local church, specifically said they had prophets and teachers among them. And it names some of them. Now, they weren't necessarily individuals that we hear much about in Scripture. These weren't individuals who wrote anything in the Bible, but they had the gift of prophecy which God used to guide the church in Antioch at that specific time. It said the Holy Spirit revealed something to them. If it's the true gift of prophecy, who is the one speaking?



97. It's the Holy Spirit speaking through the prophets. It's not the prophet giving his or her own interpretation. And what did the Holy Spirit tell them to do? The Holy Spirit said, *"I'm revealing to you to set aside Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. I want you to send them out as missionaries for me to the Gentile lands to spread the gospel and to plant churches."*



98. Now, that was a phenomenal thing the Holy Spirit revealed. Think about it. You know who Saul was, right? Saul had been the great enemy of Christianity. Saul is the one who went from city to city to arrest Christians, put them in prison, and bring them back to Jerusalem to be tried—or even killed. Saul is the one who was at the feet of Stephen watching him being stoned. But Saul had his conversion experience on the road to Damascus. He was changed and he became Paul, the great missionary.



99. But let me ask you this. Do you think the church of Antioch on its own would have taken their greatest enemy and sent him out to be their greatest missionary, to go to all these other lands and plant churches and find out where other Christians might be living? There is no way on God's green earth that the early church probably would have done that on their own.



100. That's where the Holy Spirit had to speak through the gift of prophecy to reveal to them the greater wisdom, the wisdom of the Almighty. *"Set aside Paul and Barnabas to do this."* And what was the result of that advice from the Holy Spirit? Through the true gift of prophecy, churches were planted all over the then known world. Paul became probably the greatest church planter of early Christianity in the first century. Christianity of that century changed the world forever. Much of that was because of what was prophesied through the true gift of prophecy.

ACTS 21:8-11

"On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist who was one of the



101. There's another example in Acts 21:8. It says something about the local church in a place called Caesarea. The Bible says, "*On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist who was one of the*

ACTS 21:8-11

seven, and stayed with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied. And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came



102. *seven, and stayed with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied. And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came*

ACTS 21:8-11

down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews



103. *down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews*

ACTS 21:8-11

at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"



104. *at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.' "*

Here, we see an example of more advice given by the true gift of prophecy.

ACTS 21:8-11

at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"



105. First of all, it started with this guy, Philip, in Caesarea. It says he had four young, unmarried, virgin daughters who prophesied. In other words, they had the gift of prophecy. Now it doesn't record anything that they said because apparently whatever they prophesied was just relevant for the church in Caesarea. Then it says another prophet shows up, this guy Agabus from Judea, and he says something important.



106. He takes Paul's belt, binds his own hands and says, Thus says the Holy Spirit... Notice that phrase again. It's not what Agabus said. It's what the Holy Spirit said. The Holy Spirit said that the one who owns this belt—would be bound by the Jews at Jerusalem and they will turn him over to the Gentiles.



107. What's going on here? Paul was on his way to Jerusalem. He was going back there perhaps for the first time since he had turned away from what he formerly believed. He had such a burden for his people, the Jews, to know Jesus, to know the gospel. He wanted to go back and share it with them and try to convince them.



108. But they were so angry at Paul because he became a Christian. They viewed him as the worst kind of traitor. They wanted to kill this man if they ever got their hands on him. And that's why the Holy Spirit spoke through the gift of prophecy.



109. *“Paul, don’t go. If you go, they’re going to bind you and turn you over to the Gentiles. Paul, if you go, it’s going to be the beginning of the end.”* And do you know what? Paul didn’t listen. Paul was so burdened for his countrymen to know Jesus that he went anyway-- and it happened just as the Holy Spirit said. It was in Jerusalem where he was arrested.



110. It was in Jerusalem where he was imprisoned. It was in Jerusalem that he had to speak before Festus and Agrippa. It was in Jerusalem that he appealed to Caesar. Because of that, he had to be shipped to Rome—and Rome is eventually where he died, a couple of years later. Going to Jerusalem was the beginning of the end.



111. You see, the Holy Spirit was right. This is an example of how the true gift of prophecy works. It’s meant to be a blessing. It’s meant to be a warning. It’s meant to guide us in decisions the church has to make.



112. You see, the spirit of prophecy was a vital gift Jesus gave to His church to strengthen and empower them in the seemingly impossible mission of taking the gospel to the world. Notice the gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:11-12. The Bible says, *“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. . .”*



113. Some people today think that the gift of prophecy is for making money—that the gift of prophecy is for power and influence and authority—that the gift of prophecy is for putting on a TV show and showing how big of an audience we can have or how big of an offering you can take up.



114. Many times, people think they can command the Holy Spirit what to do. It doesn't work that way. In the Bible, the Holy Spirit uses and commands us, we don't use or command the Holy Spirit.



115. The purpose of the gift of prophecy and for any gift of the spirit is taking the gospel throughout the world. That's why He made some prophets and apostles and teachers and evangelists. That's why He gives you gifts to use for Jesus. You say, *"Well, I'm not a prophet."* I get it. I'm no prophet, either! But I do know one thing—the Bible says He has given you a gift.



116. He has given you a gift that you can use in ministry, a gift that you can use to make a difference in someone's life and share a knowledge of Jesus Christ. You may not know what that is, but if you ask *"Lord, what is my gift? What can I do in service for you?"* Jesus will show that to you.



117. It might be speaking. It might be running a homeless ministry. It might be visiting people. It might be sending cards to people. It might be being a prayer warrior. It might be a digital, online ministry.



118. God has designed that every person be an active participant in making a difference in the life of others. And friends, if you think that your Christian experience is boring, if you think you can't get anything out of church, can't get anything out of the sermon, can't get anything out of the lessons, do you know how to change that? Tell God you're available for service. That's right! Don't be content just being a pew warmer.



119. Don't be content just listening to sermons and never being active in ministry. Ask Him to show you what your gift is. And when you get involved in active ministry for Jesus, that changes everything. Your Christian experience will never be the same.



120. But let's go back to our original question. Were there prophets in the Old Testament? Yes. Were there prophets in the New Testament? Yes. So, could there be prophets in the end times? According to Revelation, the answer is, yes.



121. Remember what we read in Revelation 12:17. The Bible says, "*And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*."

What did we learn in the beginning**?**



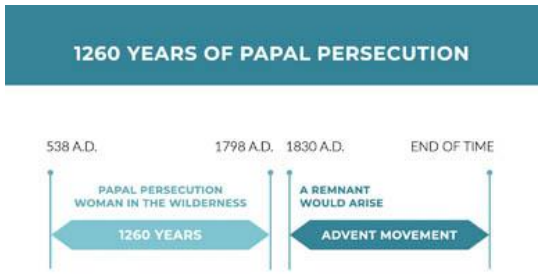
122. The two characteristics of God's last day movement are: they keep the commandments of God, and they have the testimony of Jesus. And we learned that testimony of Jesus is referring to the spirit of prophecy. In other words, Revelation 12:17 is telling us that the remnant movement of the last days would possess the active gift of prophecy.



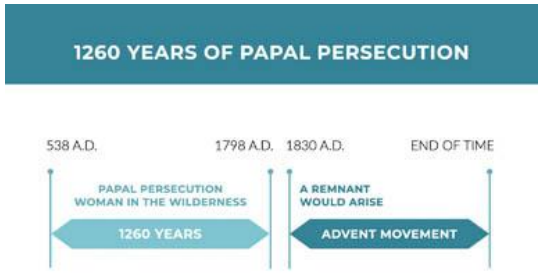
123. So, we should expect that even in the end times the true gift of prophecy will still be relevant and active in God's last day church . But here's the question: Did it happen? Was there anyone with that gift? When God's last day movement was forming, and a group was rising who uplifted all the commandments of God, including the Sabbath, was the gift of prophecy active in that movement? The answer is, yes.



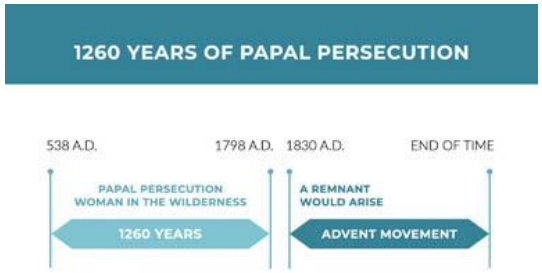
124. Remember, we learned that Revelation 12:17 spoke of an end time remnant movement that would rise after the woman was in the wilderness for 1260 years. That God's last day church would rise after the 1260 years of Papal persecution.



125. We're going to put that timeline on the screen. If you've been tracking with us throughout this seminar, you will remember this period of Roman persecution when church and state were united and the Bible was forbidden to the people lasted from 538 to 1798, exactly 1,260 years. Revelation is saying when the woman (the church) is done being in the wilderness for 1,260 years is when you will see a last day remnant movement take place. When the 1260 years of Papal persecution is over is when you'll see a last day church rise.



126. So, after 1798, we see the great Advent Movement of the 1800s where people from different faiths began to come together and study the Bible. They began to realize all the traditions and false teachings that had come into the church through the through the papal apostasy of the Middle Ages. Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, Lutherans, and others joined together in a powerful movement to come back to the truths of the Bible.



127. During this special movement of God's Holy Spirit, they discovered two awesome truths that had been lost through ages of tradition.



128. Those two truths were the second coming of Jesus and the seventh-day Sabbath. As they took those truths back to their churches in the 1800s, they were looking forward to their churches acknowledging the doctrinal slide and grasping these Bible beliefs. But the churches of the day rejected those truths and many of the people who believed them were disfellowshipped from their churches.



129. This small group of people didn't know what to do. They were coming back to the Bible. They knew they were being led of God. They were people from all faiths. But their own churches wouldn't accept these Bible truths. What were they supposed to do?



130. It was in that great Advent Movement of the 1800s that God raised up a young lady by the name of Ellen Harmon, or Ellen White, to use her married name. She was a Methodist lady who began receiving visions and dreams to help guide the people of that great Advent Movement who were coming back to the Bible and the Bible alone.



131. It is said that Ellen White received more than 2,000 prophetic visions and dreams, wrote over 50 books, and lectured to thousands on three continents.



132. Her prophecies were always accurate and fulfilled. Her messages never contradicted the Bible and always focused on Jesus.



133. She denounced the sins of God's people at the time. She wrote over 55,000 pages and is the fourth most translated writer in history.



134. We've spent a lot of time talking about the false gift of prophecy. So now, I want to share with you what I believe to be the true gift of prophecy as exemplified in that Great Advent Movement of the 1800s The Great Advent movement was made up of people from all different faiths who didn't know what to do with these Bible truths they had just discovered. Out of that movement was born what would be known as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, with people from many different denominations.



135. During that time, this Methodist lady, Ellen White began receiving visions and dreams to guide this Advent people.

Let me share with you some things she wrote so you can see an example and be able to test the Spirit.



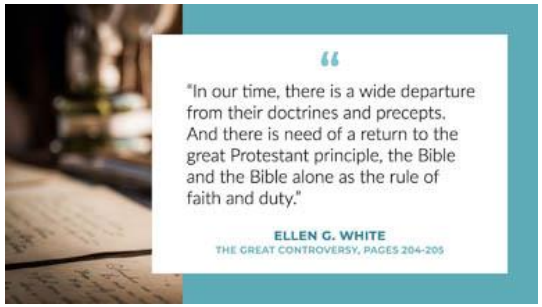
136. One of the books she wrote was called *The Desire of Ages*, probably one of the best books ever written on the life of Jesus, outside of the Bible. It takes the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, puts them together, and uses almost 4,000 Bible verses to help us see a beautiful picture of Jesus and all that He taught.



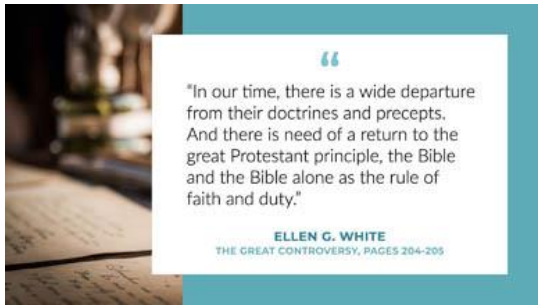
137. I'd encourage you, if you can find a copy of the book *Desire of Ages*, get it, read it, test it for yourself and you'll see an example of what the true gift of prophecy is supposed to look like and how it always points back to Jesus.



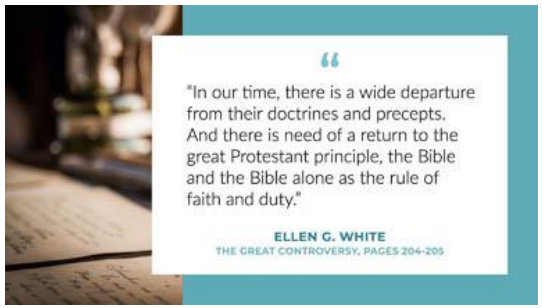
138. Another book she wrote is called *The Great Controversy*. You may have heard me mention it. *The Great Controversy* is where she wanted to guide people back to the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation that were basically being ignored in her day, in the 1800s.



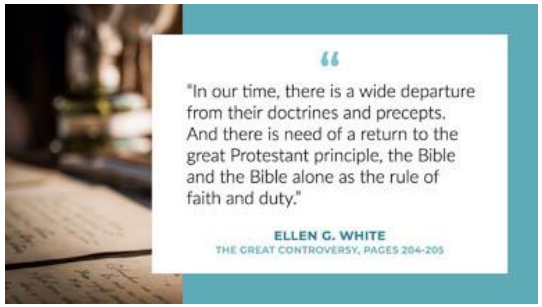
139. On pages 204 and 205 of that book, she wrote something that is just as relevant for our life today as it was back then. Speaking of the Bible she says, "*In our time, there is a wide departure from their doctrines and precepts. And there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle, the Bible and the Bible alone as the rule of faith and duty*."



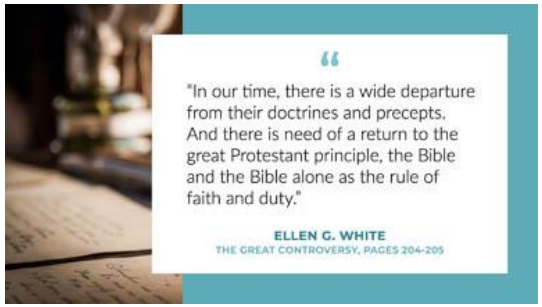
140. Ellen White saw that, even in her day, people in churches were veering away from the Bible and they were accepting the errors and traditions of men. She saw that less and less attention was being paid to God's Word, so she said we need to come back to the Bible. How much more true would that be 200 years later, as we are here in the 21st century? The world has said, "The Bible is irrelevant, archaic, not necessary anymore." Oh, how much we need to follow that advice to come back to the Bible and the Bible alone!



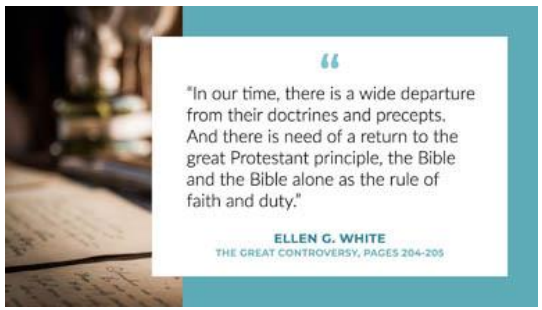
141. That's what the true gift of prophecy always does. It points us back to God's Word. It doesn't contradict it. It doesn't come up with some new-fangled idea. It doesn't follow society's trends. It always points us back to the Scriptures.



142. Now, sometimes people mistakenly say, *"Seventh-day Adventists are a cult because they base everything they believe on Ellen White. They think she's the Bible."* I stand here tonight and publicly declare that nothing could be further from the truth. We've been here in every night of this seminar and what is the only book that we have used night after night after night? The Bible and the Bible alone.

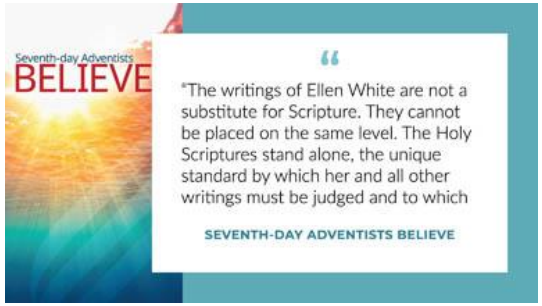


143. Some of you have looked up more verses these last few weeks than you probably have in the entire year. You've shared with us how you've had a revival in your spiritual experience. Do you know where that comes from? It comes from God's Word, my friend. Because when you open up the Bible four or five nights a week and you spend an hour reading its pages, God promises His Word will never come back to Him void. It will do a marvelous work in your heart and mind. Some of you have been experiencing that.



144. (If you need to shorten the message, you can skip this quote)

But just to make things clear, I want to read the official position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the gift of prophecy and Ellen White.



145. In the book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, it says, *"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*



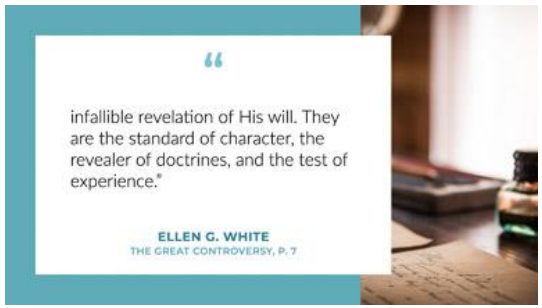
146. *they must be subject. The Bible is the supreme standard. Seventh-day Adventists fully support the reformation principle of sola scriptura, the Bible as its own interpreter and the Bible alone as the basis of all doctrines."*



147. You see, my friends, the words of a prophet should never be placed above the Bible. The words of a prophet, though good, should never be placed above the truths of Scripture. They should never be given more attention than we give to the teachings of Jesus Christ. The true gift always points us to Jesus and Him crucified.



148. In the book The Great Controversy, she said, *"In His Word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative,*



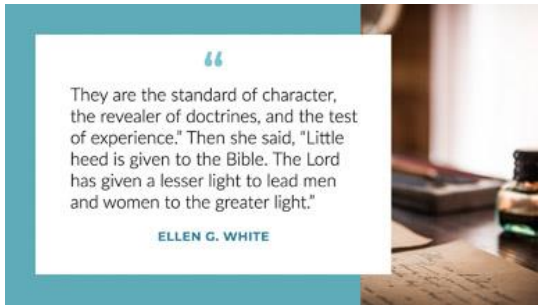
149. *infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience.”*



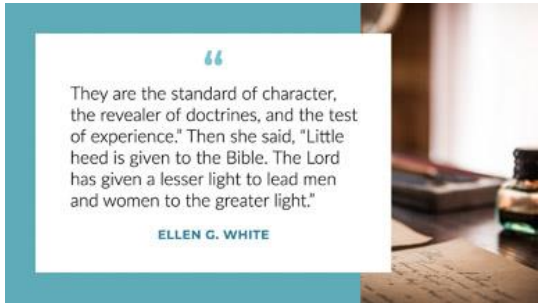
150. Then she said something that is probably the best definition of the true gift of prophecy. In the Review and Herald magazine, she wrote, *“Little heed is given to the Bible. The Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light.”*



151. Now, my friends, when I hear someone say that God has given a lesser light, the gift of prophecy, to lead people back to the greater light, the Word of God, you can know that is the genuine gift. Now, if the writer had said, “Oh no, I’m the greater light. Don’t worry about what the Bible says. Put all your attention on me and what I say and what I predict and what I prophesy,” you can know that would be a red flag that it’s the counterfeit. The true gift is a lesser light drawing people back to the greater light. And that greater light is Jesus Christ and His Word. Can you say, Amen?



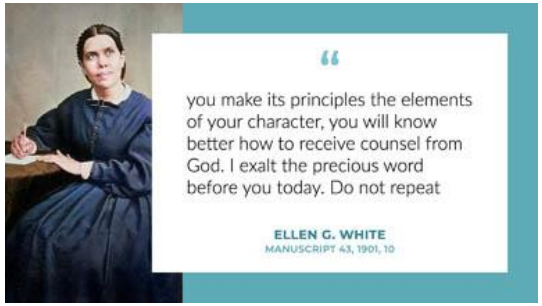
152. Lastly, I want to show you something else that she wrote, because it teaches us a good lesson. All around you’ll find people who like their favorite preachers, and people who like their favorite author, and pretty soon they are reading their favorite author instead of reading the Bible, and they are listening to their favorite preacher instead of reading the Scriptures for themselves. They let their preacher, or they let their author become the Bible for them and that’s a dangerous thing to do.



153. Well, in Ellen White’s day, some people were starting to take her writings and placing them above the Bible. When she found out what a group of people were doing, listen to the stern rebuke that she gave them.



154. She said, *“Lay Sister White to one side. Do not quote my works again as long as you live until you can obey the Bible. When you make the Bible your food, your meat and your drink, when*



155. *you make its principles the elements of your character, you will know better how to receive counsel from God. I exalt the precious word before you today. Do not repeat*



156. *what I have said, saying, ‘Sister White said this,’ and, ‘Sister White said that.’ Find out what the Lord God of Israel says, and then do what He commands.”—Manuscript 43, 1901, 10.*



157. Was Ellen White putting her writings down? Not at all. What she was teaching people is, *"The gift of prophecy is a lesser light. It leads to the greater light. The true gift receives its light from the Bible, so don't put the gift above the Bible. Don't go around and continue to quote someone or some author or some preacher over the Bible."*



158. The Bible, my friends, is what we need. And when I hear someone proclaiming that, I know it's the true gift of prophecy because they will not let the attention be continually drawn to themselves. This is the sign of the genuine gift of prophecy which is meant to be a blessing.



159. So, my friends, as we close our meetings tonight, what are the three tests? Number one, they receive their messages through visions and dreams. Number two, they will be accurate, and their word will come to pass. Number three, they will always agree with the Bible and never contradict it.



160. You might be thinking, *"Pastor Dave, how am I supposed to know if Ellen White, or anybody else for that matter, has the true gift of prophecy?"* You always go back to the tests, my friends. What are the tests that God gave us to show the difference between the genuine and that which is counterfeit? Follow those Biblical tests are you'll always be safe.



161. In fact, if I can leave you with anything tonight, it would be this. You can't test the spirit until you know your Bible, my friends. In order to test the spirit, you have to be familiar with what the Word of God says.



162. Notice what it says in the book of 2 Timothy 3:16. This will be our final verse for tonight, because this is what I want us to end on. The Bible says, "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in*



163. *righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*."

What is Scripture good for? It helps me to know truth and error. It introduces me to Jesus. It helps me experience what it means to be born again.



164. Friends, if you've been reading some author or listening to some preacher more than you've been reading the Word of God, then for the next few months I want to invite you to lay aside the other books. Lay aside the other preacher. I want to invite you to commit to having a daily devotional life with Jesus. I want to invite you to commit that you will spend at least 30 minutes a day reading the Word of God.



165. Through reading the Bible you will know truth. Through reading the Bible you will know Jesus. Through reading the Bible you will experience salvation and being born again. And when you're familiar with the Word of God, then you can pick up other authors and you'll be able to know the difference between that which is true and that which is false.



166. And so tonight, would you make that commitment with me? And would you be willing to say, *"Lord Jesus, wake me up in the morning and give me a desire to read Your Word?"* Would you be willing to say, *"Lord, make me thirsty for Your Word again? Make me thirstier than I have ever been for the Bible? Take Your Word and change me."* May that be our prayer tonight.



167. If you'd like to ask Jesus to make you thirsty for the Bible again, I invite you to raise your hand as we pray.



168. Heavenly Father, thank You for blessing us with the true gift of prophecy that is meant to guide and encourage. Thank you for these tests that keep us from being deceived. But Lord, our prayer now in these last days is that we would always make Your Word first and foremost in our life. We're asking You to make us thirsty for You, Lord Jesus. Make us thirsty for Your Word once again. Thank you that You will answer the prayers of all those who have raised their hands tonight. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.