

PURPOSE OF STUDY: To understand the importance of the gift of prophecy, its continuing role in the Christian church, and how to know the difference between the true and the false.

TEXTS:

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| 1. MT 7:15 | 3c. MT 7:18-20 |
| 2. 1TH 5:19-21 | 3d. JE 28:9 (2KI 10:10) |
| 3a. IS 8:20 | 4. JE 18:7-10 (JON 3:1-5, 10) |
| 3b. 1JN 4:2 | 5. ZEC 1:3-4 |

THE STUDY:

- 1. What particular counterfeit did Jesus warn His followers against in the last days? MT 7:15**
False prophets. Of course, the existence of the false implies the existence of the true; nobody seeks to counterfeit a \$3 bill these days, because there is no genuine \$3 bill in circulation.
- 2. How can we know whether a prophet is a true prophet or a false one? 1TH 5:19-21**
We are to test them.
- 3. What are the Biblical tests of a prophet?**
 - a. A true prophet will never contradict what God has already revealed in His Word. IS 8:20**
There are churches that claim to have the prophetic gift, but also claim that there are problems with the Bible and that their "prophets" corrected them, or that because their prophet's message is a more recent one, it is a more accurate one. This is a violation of test # 1. The Scriptures are the rule by which everything else must be tested.

Ellen White always uplifted the Bible. She wrote "I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the "last days"; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth." – Selected Messages, Vol. 3, p. 29.

- b. A true prophet will attest to the Bible truth of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. 1JN 4:2**
A true prophet will emphasize both the divine and the human elements of Christ's nature. The Church of Rome has long taught the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. This teaching says that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was born sinless so that the nature of the incarnate Christ could be completely different from the nature of those He came to save. This teaching, according to this verse, is the teaching of Antichrist. The Scripture, on the other hand, teaches that while Jesus was indeed the Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth, yet He took upon Himself our fallen humanity so that by His divine nature He could elevate humanity back to its original purity and perfection.

Ellen White affirmed this when she wrote "Though He had no taint of sin upon His character, yet He condescended to connect our fallen human nature with His divinity. By thus taking humanity, He honored humanity. Having taken our fallen nature, he showed what it might become, by accepting the ample provision He has made for it, and by becoming partaker of the divine nature. – Selected Messages, Vol. 3, p. 134.

c. A true prophet will be known by the fruit of their character and ministry. MT 7:18-20

Jesus said “By their fruits you shall know them.” The life of the prophet, as well as the results of following the prophet’s teachings, should magnify the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Regarding Ellen White’s life and character, the following appeared in the secular weekly paper the St. Helena Star of July 23, 1915, just one week after her death on July 16 –

“The life of Mrs. White is an example worthy of emulation by all... She was a humble, devout disciple of Christ, and ever went about doing good... honored and respected by all who appreciate noble womanhood consecrated to unselfish labor for the uplifting and betterment of mankind.”

Regarding her teaching, untold numbers of people have been converted to Christ by reading her books. In a study conducted by Andrews University comparing readers of Ellen White with non-readers, it was discovered that “Readers have a closer relationship with Christ, more certainty of their standing with God, and are more likely to have identified their spiritual gifts. They are more in favor of spending for public evangelism and contribute more heavily to local missionary projects. They feel more prepared for witnessing and actually engage in more witnessing and outreach programs. They are more likely to study the Bible daily, to pray for specific people, to meet in fellowship groups, and to have daily family worship. They see their church more positively. They are responsible for winning more converts.” – Seventh-day Adventists Believe..., pp. 257-8.

d. A true prophet’s predictions will always come to pass. JE 28:9 (2KI 10:10)

In prophecies that are not conditional – that is, dependent on a personal response to determine their fulfillment – the prophet is 100 percent accurate. The so-called prophets of our day miss the mark completely on this test. A few of their predictions may come to pass, but most are never fulfilled.

Ellen White has written on such subjects as health, education, parenting, leadership, and prophecy. Many of her teachings which were ridiculed by the experts of her day are being confirmed by cutting edge science today. For example, 1864, she wrote “Tobacco is a poison of the most deceitful and malignant kind,” while it wasn’t until 1957 that the American Heart Association issued the statement that cigarette smoking caused cancer. She has predicted, among other things, the San Francisco earthquake, the Civil war and the two world wars. She foretold the rise of modern spiritualism and the ecumenical movement. She gave many divine warnings to church leaders and the church at large, and in so doing has saved the cause of God many trials. Her writings continue to validate her gift.

4. What did God promise if a nation turned from its course of action? JE 18:7-10 (JON 3:1-5, 10)

He would relent from what He had prophesied. In harmony with His counsel to Jeremiah, the Lord has at times “relented” from what has been prophesied when certain conditions were met, even though the conditions were not explicitly stated in the prophecy itself. Jonah’s prophecy was conditional, even though Jonah didn’t state a condition in the delivery of it (Jon. 3:3, 4, 5, 10). God’s promise to bring Israel into the Promised Land was conditional (Ex. 6:2, 6-8; Num. 14:26-34). Also, God’s promise to honor the descendants of Aaron was conditional (Ex. 29:9; Num. 25:13; 1 Sam. 2:27f). A prophet who prophesies a conditional prophecy that fails when the conditions are not met cannot rightly be called a false prophet.

5. What mistake of our forefathers does God warn us not to repeat? ZE 1:3-4

We are urged not to disregard the warnings of the prophets, but to hear and obey them, returning to the Lord with all our hearts.

APPEAL:

As we have reviewed the Biblical tests of the prophets, and have briefly applied these tests to the ministry of Ellen White, we have seen that her gift is in harmony with the Bible. Seventh-day Adventists believe that her ministry is the fulfillment of God’s promise in Revelation to give the gift of prophecy to His last day church. Will you choose to investigate her writings for yourself, that you may have confidence in this precious gift of God given to guide us to our heavenly homes?