

**THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY**

In the first lessons of this series, and in the first chapters of the book of Genesis, we learned that Adam and Eve once enjoyed face-to-face communion with God. Then they sinned and God could no longer visit them face to face. Yet, as sinners, they desperately needed God's instruction and guidance and encouragement. With the passing of time, God chose certain human beings through whom He could speak to other human beings and give them the instruction, guidance, and encouragement they needed. These chosen spokesmen were called "prophets" (1 Samuel 9:9) and in the New Testament "apostles" – and thus, "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21).

In our last lesson we studied some of the identifying marks of Christ's last day "remnant." The key verse was Revelation 12:17, in which our Lord refers to the last remnant of His followers on earth, remaining after the close of the 1260 years persecution of His people (verses 13-16), who would be known because they kept the commandments, and because they had "the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The key question of this lesson focuses around this: Exactly what is meant by the testimony of Jesus Christ? Is there a relation between that term and God's speaking through chosen spokespersons throughout history?

1. We need to begin by looking more closely at our key verse, Revelation 12:17. Re-read it. You may have a translation of the Bible that says that the remnant "have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (as the King James Version), or that they "bear testimony to Jesus" (as the Revised Standard Version). No one would question that converted Christians of all time would bear testimony to Jesus. (See Revelation 14:12.) What is this verse trying to tell us about the remnant?
  - (a) How is the same term defined in Revelation 19:10? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Cruden's Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments offers this definition of the term, "testimony": "The whole scripture, or word of God, which declares what is to be believed and practiced." – Page 665.)
  - (b) How is this same term used in Revelation 1:1,2? \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: In the setting of Revelation, and particularly these companion texts, the term in 12:17 would convey the idea that the remnant would have the witness of Jesus in their midst through the medium of the prophetic gift. Both 1 Corinthians 12:4-10 and Ephesians 4:8-11 include the gift of prophecy as a gift of the Spirit to the church "for the perfecting of the saints" (verse 12). A careful study of the word "remnant" throughout the Bible reveals that God has, at many times, sent a living prophet to help guide it.

2. Summarize the following passages which help us to have a bird's eye view of the purpose and work and value of a prophet.
  - (a) Amos 3:7: \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) Hosea 12:13: \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) 2 Chronicles 20:20, last part: \_\_\_\_\_
  - (d) Proverbs 29:18: \_\_\_\_\_

(Take a Bible concordance and study the word "prophet" or "seer" as God sent this down through history. What an important work they did.)

3. What are some of the methods that God used to reach the prophet? What channels can you find in these texts?

- (a) Numbers 12:6: \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Daniel 8:16,17; 9:21-23: \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Exodus 3:1-6 (also Acts 9:3-6): \_\_\_\_\_

4. We agree that all of these things could happen and did happen over and over in Bible times. But many of us wrestle with the question of whether there could be a genuine prophet after the Bible was finished. It is an important question to wrestle with. 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 both clearly tell us that the gift or spirit of prophecy is one of the gifts of the Spirit of God to the close of earth's history. And Revelation 12:17 includes it as an identifying mark of Christ's last remnant of true followers on earth. In what setting does the prophet Joel speak of dreams, visions, and prophesying in the last days? See Joel 2:28-31, particularly verse 31. Summarize.
- \_\_\_\_\_

(Would it be fair to say that God's Spirit and His work of leading people is timeless? When there is special need, God leads.)

5. The key point is that, if someone does arise at any time, and claim the prophetic gift, his or her claims must be carefully tested. No one likes deception, but no one should close his eyes to genuine leading from God. Summarize the following texts of Scripture to find exactly how God Himself wants such claims tested. Even the prophets and apostles had to be thoroughly tested. There were also false prophets then, as there have been others throughout history.

- (a) Review 2 Peter 1:21. What kind of a person will the prophet be?
- \_\_\_\_\_

- (b) What will be the central theme of the prophet? 1 John 4:1-3.
- \_\_\_\_\_

- (c) What will be his relation to other true prophets? Isaiah 8:20.
- \_\_\_\_\_



- (d) What will a true prophet reprove? Jeremiah 23:16,17. \_\_\_\_\_

- (e) What if the prophet prophesies? Jeremiah 28:9. \_\_\_\_\_

- (f) What results from the work of a true prophet? Matthew 7:15-20. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6. God wants unity among those who follow Him. (See John 17:20,21.) Adam and Eve lost it through sin. The history of man is a sad portrayal of disunity. The work of both prophet and apostle, as they spoke for God what they received from God down through history, has always been to bring harmony and unity with God and truth. The problem: So many will not listen. What does Paul counsel in 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

7. The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that Mrs. Ellen G. White has been used by God in leading men and women to holiness and perfection of character, as a part of His great plan to commune with mankind through the "gift" or "spirit" of prophecy. You are invited to read one of her books, such as Desire of Ages, Steps to Christ, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, or Christ's Object Lessons and see for yourself, test for yourself, her claims that God has used her in this role? Lesson 31, which you are invited to read at home, is a fascinating study of some of her predictions--the exact fulfillment of which must stand the test. Her writings are not the Bible, nor another Bible; she openly disclaims such. But if she has been a messenger that God has used, and did receive the gift of prophecy, then what God says through her could be very valuable. You are invited to examine the claims, test the product, consider whether God did use her.

How has God communed with man		<u><b>AFTER SIN?</b></u>	<u><b>What about prophets</b></u>	<u><b>How can their claims</b></u>
		1b. God spoke thru _____ (Rev. 1:1)	<u><b>after Bible finished?</b></u> 4. _____	<u><b>be tested?</b></u> 5a. _____
<u><b>BEFORE SIN?</b></u>		Guided by _____	_____	5b. _____
_____		_____ (2 Peter 1:21)	_____	5c. _____
_____		To _____	_____	5d. _____
_____		&	_____	5e. _____
_____		Ap _____	_____	5f. _____
_____		(Amos 1:21)	_____	6. _____
_____		_____	_____	_____

(The coming of sin ended this.)	<u><b>Methods God uses</b></u> <u><b>to communicate with man:</b></u>
_____	3a. _____
_____	3b. _____
_____	3c. _____