

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.

<p>How has God communed with man</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p><u>BEFORE SIN?</u></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	→	<p><u>AFTER SIN?</u></p> <p>1b. God spoke thru _____ (Rev. 1:1)</p> <p>Guided by _____ _____ (2 Peter 1:21)</p> <p>To _____</p> <p>&</p> <p>Ap _____ (Amos 1:21)</p>	<p><u>What about prophets after Bible finished?</u></p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p><u>How can their claims be tested?</u></p> <p>5a. _____</p> <p>5b. _____</p> <p>5c. _____</p> <p>5d. _____</p> <p>5e. _____</p> <p>5f. _____</p> <p>6. _____</p>
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="font-size: 2em; margin-right: 10px;">+</div> </div>				
<p>(The coming of sin ended this.)</p>	<p><u>Methods God uses to communicate with man:</u></p> <p>3a. _____</p> <p>3b. _____</p> <p>3c. _____</p>			

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Notes for the Instructor

Purpose of lesson 30: This lesson follows the study of Rev. 12 seeking to focus on the last mark of identity in verse 17 that the last remnant will have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Many studies have been made of this term in this verse, and in the context of the book of Revelation. Seek not to be "bold" in an offensive way on this subject, but again avoid blurring the subject, and challenge the student to investigate at least one book, particularly one of those mentioned in question 7. If possible, have one with you at the time of this study to give it as a gift. If your student's appetite is whetted, supply the "dish" for immediate eating! The real purpose of this lesson is to add this evidence of the living gift of prophecy to other identifying marks, so that people will choose the church for a better reason than just its being more like the Bible than other churches. The church arose at a specific time, to preach a specific message, guided by a specific messenger. Sharpen the concept; don't blur it.

During the study itself: Question 1 is the crucial question of the lesson. Re-study 7BC 812-815, 873, 876, 877. Also study carefully Unto a Perfect Man, pages 169-172. The other questions need clarity, but are not difficult.

Appeal: Make a very sincere, inoffensive invitation to take your gift Ellen G. White book and prayerfully read it. When he finishes, you may want to ask him for his reflections concerning it. The proof of the pudding is still in the eating. Lesson 31 will add interest to the writings and work of Mrs. White.

Illustration: The visual aid makes a simple summary so that the many facts can be retained more easily.

<p>How has God communed with man</p> <p>↓</p> <p><u>BEFORE SIN?</u> Face-to-face with Adam</p>	<p>→</p> <p><u>AFTER SIN?</u></p> <p>1b. God spoke thru Christ (Rev. 1:1) Guided by Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21) To Prophets & Apostles (Amos 1:21)</p> <p>+</p>	<p><u>What about prophets after Bible finished?</u></p> <p>4. Joel predicted Timeless gift of Spirit Remnant to have gift</p>	<p><u>How can their claims be tested?</u></p> <p>5a. A Godly person 5b. Christ-centered 5c. Harmony 5d. Reproves sin 5e. Prophecies fulfilled 5f. Good fruits results 6. Brings unity</p>
<p>(The coming of sin ended this.)</p>		<p><u>Methods God uses:</u></p> <p>3a. Visions & Dreams 3b, Angels 3c. Audible voice</p>	

Introduction**1 Samuel 9:9**

⁹(Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he spoke thus: “Come, let us go to the seer”; for *he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer.*)

2 Peter 1:21

²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

1. Revelation 12:17

¹⁷And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 14:12

¹²Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

1a. Revelation 19:10

¹⁰And 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, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Answer: The “testimony of Jesus” is “the spirit of prophecy”.

1b. Revelation 1:1, 2

¹The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His servant John, ²who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

Answer: The “testimony of Jesus Christ” is the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Summary:**1 Corinthians 12:4-10**

⁴There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. ⁷But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*: ⁸for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

Ephesians 4:8-11

⁸Therefore He says:

*“When He ascended on high,
He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts to men.”*

⁹(Now this, “*He ascended*”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

¹¹And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

2a. Amos 3:7

⁷ Surely the Lord GOD does nothing,
Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

Answer: God reveals what He is going to do to His prophets before He actually does what He plans on doing.

2b. Hosea 12:13

¹³By a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt,
And by a prophet he was preserved.

Answer: God used a prophet (Moses) to bring Israel out of Egypt and to guide them through the wilderness on their way to Canan.

2c. 2 Chronicles 20:20

²⁰So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.”

Answer: God reveals His truths about life and salvation through His prophets.

2d. Proverbs 29:18

¹⁸ Where *there is* no revelation, the people cast off restraint;
But happy *is* he who keeps the law.

Answer: Prophets call people back to the safety of the law.

3a. Numbers 12:6

⁶Then He said,
 “Hear now My words:
 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.

Answer: Visions and dreams.

3b. Daniel 8:16, 17

¹⁶And I heard a man’s voice between *the banks of* the Ulai, who called, and said, “Gabriel, make this *man* understand the vision.” ¹⁷So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, “Understand, son of man, that the vision *refers* to the time of the end.”

Daniel 9:21-23

²¹yes, while I *was* speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. ²²And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. ²³At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell *you*, for you *are* greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

Answer: The angel Gabriel came and spoke to Daniel and told him what God wanted him to know.

3c. Exodus 3:1-6

¹Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ²And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush *was* not consumed. ³Then Moses said, “I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.”

Acts 9:3-6

³As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. ⁴Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, *why are you persecuting Me?*”
⁵And he said, “Who are You, Lord?”
 Then the Lord said, “*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.*”
⁶So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?”
 Then the Lord *said* to him, “*Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.*”

Answers: God spoke to Moses through the “burning bush” and to Paul through the “light from heaven”.

4a. Joel 2:28-31

- ²⁸ “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,
Your young men shall see visions.
²⁹ And also on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.
³⁰ “And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth:
Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.
³¹ The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

Answer: In the time of the end, when the signs of the end will be taking place (sun darkened and the moon turns blood red) God will give both men and women dreams and visions before His 2nd Coming.

5a. 2 Peter 1:21

²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

Answer: They are “holy men of God” as evidenced by their life and they do the bidding of the Holy Spirit.

5b. 1 John 4:1-3

¹Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, ³and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

Answers: True prophets will acknowledge that Jesus Christ did come in the flesh when he was on this earth.

5c. Isaiah 8:20

²⁰To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them.

Answer: Prophets will speak a message that is in harmony with the Bible (Old Testament and the New Testament).

5d. Jeremiah 23:16, 17

⁶Thus says the Lord of hosts:
 “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you.
 They make you worthless;
 They speak a vision of their own heart,
 Not from the mouth of the Lord.
¹⁷ They continually say to those who despise Me,
 ‘The Lord has said, “You shall have peace”’;
 And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say,
 ‘No evil shall come upon you.’”

Answer: True prophets will speak against those who give a message that is not in harmony with the Bible.

5e. Jeremiah 28:9

⁹As for the prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet comes to pass, the prophet will be known as one whom the Lord has truly sent.”

Answer: A true prophets predictions will come true.

5f. Matthew 7:15-20

¹⁵“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.
¹⁶You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Answer: A true prophet’s life will have a positive influence (the fruit of their labors) on those around him/her.

6. John 17:20, 21

²⁰“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21

¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies. ²¹Test all things; hold fast what is good.

Answer: Listen to what the prophet(s) say and allow the Holy Spirit to direct how one incorporated the message of the prophet(s), which will lead to unit among the Believers.