

THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY TESTED

The writers of sacred Scripture continually advocate that their words are but a conveying of messages which God gave them, both for themselves and other people.

Jeremiah 1:7

⁷But the Lord said to me:
“Do not say, ‘I *am* a youth,’
For you shall go to all to whom I send you,
And whatever I command you, you shall speak.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

¹³For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the Bible writers has been the foretelling of the future – the coming of the Messiah, the setting up of future nations, important coming events, signs by which the time of Christ's second coming could be known, etc. It was only with the passing of time that their many predictions could be verified. Some are still future and we must continue to wait to verify them. But we do have a confidence because of past fulfillment.

In our last lesson the claim was made that God, in modern times, could and did speak through another human messenger, Mrs. Ellen G. White. She also claims, and many times, to be but passing on the word of the Lord. She claims that she wrote down what she "saw" in vision. She wrote thousands of pages of commentary on the messages of the Bible, particularly the life and teachings of Christ. She also wrote on education, health, youth guidance, stewardship, Bible doctrines, witnessing, and numerous personal counsel to individuals. Her favorite theme was the plan of salvation, in the setting of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, between good and evil. As the Bible prophets, she also makes predictions of the future.

As we studied last time, one of the ways to test someone who claims to speak for God is to see if his or her future predictions have come to pass.

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.

John 14:29

²⁹“**And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.**

Regardless of when a prophet lived, if an all-knowing God truly was speaking through him or her, any information relative to future events must prove to be accurate. The purpose of this lesson is to examine, as carefully and objectively as possible, a sampling of some of the insights and actual predictions which are found in the Ellen White writings, and which were future to the time when they were actually written by her. We will look at samples in three areas, (1) predictions where documented events have occurred since her time of writings which fulfill her words; (2) predictions she made that are today in the process of being fulfilled; and (3) predictions that are in reference to events, trends, conditions which are still in the future.

UNTO A PERFECT MAN, Study Guides by Carl Coffman

1. **The open space in Orion.**

On December 16, 1848, the Lord gave Mrs. White this view: "Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back; then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God. The Holy City will come down through that open space."---Early Writings of Ellen G. White, page 41.

Mrs. White was then only 21, and had never studied in the field of astronomy. We know today that the constellation of Orion is a group of stars, while the Orion nebula appears to the naked eye as one star within the group. Astronomers have been fascinated with particularly the nebula, which has revealed her secrets with the development of larger telescopes since 1848, and the technique of photographing stars by time exposure.

In the audience who witnessed Mrs. White in vision that day was Joseph Bates, a leader in the early Adventist movement. He was quite well versed in astronomy and knew that Mrs. White knew nothing about it. He was also skeptical of Mrs. White's claims of having true visions from the Lord. When he heard her describe what she saw, he said: "That description far surpasses any account of the open space in Orion I have ever read. . . . It is ahead of anything I ever read on the subject."---A. W. Spalding, Captains of the Host, page 132.

Sixty-two years later, in 1910, the astronomer, Edgar Larkin wrote in the Los Angeles Examiner (January 14): "The eye of man has not before beheld anything to compare with the wonderful photograph of the great nebula of Orion recently taken in the Mount Wilson observatory here in Southern California. Since the invention of the telescope, this nebula has been viewed with ever increasing interest. . . .

"The photographs of the nebula of Orion, by long exposure, . . . surpass the extreme limit of all powers of human imagination. These negatives reveal the opening and interior of a cavern so stupendous that our entire solar system, including the orbit of Neptune, would be lost therein. In all ordinary telescopes the nebula looks like a flat surface. I have watched it since the days of youth in many telescopes of many powers, but never dreamed that the center region is the mouth of a colossal cave. . . .

"The diameter of the orbit traversed by our earth around the sun is 186,000,000 miles. Ninety thousand of these orbits, side by side, forming one straight line of rings could enter this appalling chasm." (Emphasis supplied.)

Did the God Who made the stars, and Who knows all about them, reveal secrets of one of them to Mrs. White, long before astronomers discovered God's secret with the telescopes? Joseph Bates was convinced.

2. **A prediction of the Civil War and its great bloodshed.**

On January 12, 1861, at an afternoon meeting in a church in Parkville, Michigan, Mrs. White who had been speaking was given a vision. Four states had seceded from the Union within three weeks but no one expected war. In fact, it was not until three more months that President Lincoln called for an army.

On coming out of vision, Mrs. White told the audience that the nation was on the brink of war. She described views of armies in conflict, with terrible carnage by bullet and bayonet. She saw battlefields covered with the dead and dying. She saw homes where distress and anguish reigned because of the loss of husbands, sons, and brothers. Then she said sadly to that audience: "There are those in this house who will lose sons in that war."---J. N. Loughborough, The Great Second Advent Movement, Its Rise and Progress, page 338.

In a few months the war began and lasted for four years. Five families who had been in the church that day lost loved ones.

3. In a time of peace, Mrs. White saw great troubles coming.

She wrote the following in the Signs of the Times, April 21, 1890: "The tempest is coming, and we must get ready for its fury by having repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord will arise to shake terribly the earth. We shall see troubles on all sides. Thousands of ships will be hurled into the depths of the sea. Navies will go down, and human lives will be sacrificed by millions. Fires will break out unexpectedly, and no human efforts will be able to quench them. Disasters by rail will become more and more frequent; confusion, collision, and death without a moment's warning will occur on the great lines of travel. The end is near, probation is closing. Oh, let us seek God while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near."

In 1904, she gave another warning: "Soon great trouble will arise among the nations,-- trouble that will not cease until Jesus comes."---The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, Feb. 11, page 8.

Consider what happened back in those days. In 1892, the first American automobile. About a decade later, the first trial flight by plane. World Wars I and II came. Navies went down, millions died. Incendiary bombs, unthought of in 1890, created terrible fires. From 1900 to 1955, 1,149,414 Americans died on the highway. On the great lines of travel in 1956 alone, more were injured in the United States than were wounded in all of the wars that the United States has participated in.

4. The above are only samplings. What about predictions that are today being fulfilled?

Many, many times, Ellen White warned that the Bible was, and would be attacked, minimized, confused, rejected. Compare this one quotation from her pen with the conditions of today: God's holy word, which has been handed down to us at such a cost of suffering and blood, is but little value. . . . Many have come to deny doctrines which are the very pillars of the Christian faith. The great facts of creation as presented by the inspired writers, the fall of man, the atonement, and the perpetuity of the law of God, are practically rejected, either wholly or in part, by a large share of the professedly Christian world."---Great Controversy, page 582, first published in 1888. (Emphasis supplied.)

5. Ellen White spoke a number of times about difficulties connected with the labor unions.

Note this one statement: "Through the working of trusts and the results of labor unions and strikes, the conditions of life in the city are constantly becoming more and more difficult. Serious troubles are before us, and for many families removal from cities will become a necessity."---The Ministry of Healing, page 364, first published in 1905. (Emphasis supplied.)

6. As does the Bible, Ellen White pictures the increase of calamity as the end of time draws nearer.

Note this: "In the last scenes of this earth's history, war will rage. There will be pestilence, plague, and famine. The waters of the deep will overflow their boundaries. Property and life will be destroyed by fire and flood. We should be preparing for the mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for them that love him."---The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, Oct. 19, 1897, pages 1,2.

7. **Ellen White had outstanding insights and predictions in connection with the medical field, and individual health. Note this one about the use of tobacco:**

"Tobacco is a poison of the most deceitful and malignant kind, having an exciting, then a paralyzing influence upon the nerves of the body. It is all the more dangerous because its effects upon the system are so slow, and at first scarcely perceivable. Multitudes have fallen victims to its poisonous influence. They have surely murdered themselves by this slow poison."---Spiritual Gifts, Volume 4, page 128, published in 1864.

Note what Alton Ochsner said in 1959: "The sum total of scientific evidence established beyond reasonable doubt that cigarette smoking is a causative factor in the rapidly increasing incidence of human epidermoid carcinoma of the lung."---Smoking and Health, page 40.

8. **Long before medical science ever discovered such, Ellen White wrote this about cancer:**

"People are continually eating flesh that is filled with tuberculosis and cancerous germs. Tuberculosis, cancer, and other fatal diseases are thus communicated."---The Ministry of Healing, page 313, first published in 1905. (Emphasis supplied.)

In 1958, this report appeared in Time magazine: "One thing that medicine's learned men once knew, or thought they knew, was that cancer was not infectious. Therefore, no 'infectious agent' could be involved in its origin. . . . Today no line of investigation into the origins of human cancer is being pressed more vigorously than the implicating viruses [submicroscopic infective organisms] as at least partly responsible."---"From a Sick Chicken," Time, Oct. 27, 1958, page 47.

9. **Have you heard of the dangers of using too much fat in the diet? Listen to this statement from Ellen White:**

"Both the blood and the fat of animals are consumed as a luxury. But the Lord gave special directions that these should not be eaten. Why? Because their use would make a diseased current of blood in the human system. The disregard for the Lord's special directions has brought a variety of difficulties and diseases upon human beings."---Counsels on Diet and Foods, page 393. Statement made by Mrs. White in 1896.

Doctors Norman Joffiffe and Ancel Keys wrote this in 1960: "Saturated fats stimulate the body's production of cholesterol, which joins other substances to line and narrow the arteries, making them susceptible to blockages that can starve the heart or brain and cause death."---"Fat in the Fire," Time, Dec. 26, 1960, page 33.

10. **Conclusion:** In light of the above materials, which again are only brief samplings of the writings of Ellen G. White who lived from 1827 to 1915, and who had her first vision in December, 1844, many would label her, as people did the prophets and apostles in the days of the Bible, a doom prophet. Nothing could be further from the truth. It should be remembered, as we found in the three angels of Revelation 14:6-12, that true messages from God not only instruct but warn. As stated at the beginning, Mrs. White's favorite theme was always to invite men and women to study the Bible and accept Jesus. The third angels' message concludes with the saints who keep God's commandments and the faith of Jesus. You are invited to read further into her writings to discover their richness and personal value as the end nears for us all.

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Notes for the Instructor

Purpose of lesson 31: First, the lesson is a take-home lesson for the student, following the basic presentation of the Spirit of Prophecy. The inclusion of this type of lesson in the series was suggested several years ago by one of the editors of Ministry, the monthly journal of the General Conference Ministerial Association. You can obtain many documents which could be given to your student if interested, which would further enlighten him and lead him to study into the Ellen G. White books, from the Ellen G. White Publications, 6840 Eastern Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, 20012.

We must get our students to read, investigate, be thrilled by, the Ellen G. White books if we expect them truly to accept her as God's true messenger. You could give them Steps to Christ at the conclusion of lesson 6. Later, you might make them the gift of Desire of Ages, maybe as early as following lessons 10 and 11, inviting them to read pages 627-636, on Matthew 24. We do not need to hassle the matter of the author with them, but rather invite them to read a few pages in the finest commentary on the life of Christ that there is in print. Lessons 30 and 31 are far easier if you have already gotten them to "taste and see" some very wonderful things before presenting the modern "testimony of Jesus Christ."

Appeal: Since the lesson is a reading lesson, it must make its own appeal. However, as you seek their response later to what is contained therein, you could emphasize John 14:29, "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe." And emphasize that all of her counsel is to the end that we might be ready for the Lord's second coming.

Illustration: None in the reading lesson.

Introduction

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