

Throughout the Bible God revealed His divine will and provided guidance to His people through the gift of prophecy. In ancient times prophets were called "seers" (1 Samuel 9:9). They provided spiritual guidance through divine messages, dreams, and visions. Prophets were called directly by God and were inspired by Him. They delivered messages to Israel and other nations, kings, priests, and individuals. Although many prophets in the Bible wrote Scripture, God used other prophets throughout Biblical history who never wrote Scripture such as Nathan, Miriam, Huldah, John the Baptist, and Agabus. Nonetheless, they functioned in the prophetic office and spoke messages that aligned with the Scriptures. Just as this gift functioned in Bible times, it operates in God's church today. The prophetic gift does not supersede or add to Scripture, neither does it contradict Scripture. As we approach the end, prophecy is especially important as it will help navigate God's people through the perils of the last days. Let's study and learn What God Says About..."The Gift of Prophecy."

THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

1. **What is the purpose of the gift of prophecy?**

   "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to _____, and _____, and _____." *1 Corinthians 14:3*

2. **What spiritual entity does the gift of prophecy edify?**

   "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth _____ _____." *1 Corinthians 14:4*

Note: *1 Corinthians 14 is written in the context of a public worship service in which there was a misuse and abuse of the gift of tongues. We learned in a previous study that a tongue is a language. Paul does not denigrate the gift of tongues, but he does explain its purpose and proper function in the church. Clearly, those who were collectively speaking in foreign languages were edifying themselves, not the church. In contrast, Paul makes clear that those who prophesy edify the church. Those who interpret tongues also edify the church (vs. 5).*

3. According to the apostle Paul, the gift of prophecy serves for the purpose of whom?

"Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for _____ _____ _____." *1 Corinthians 14:22*

Note: *According to the apostle Paul, prophecy serves as a guide for believers. In other words, the gift of prophecy confirms that God's abiding presence is truly among His church. This gift edifies and strengthens the members of the church, and it is an important means through which God not only predicts the future, but also communicates His will to His church. Therefore, the gift of prophecy is necessary and will remain in the church until Jesus returns. The gift of tongues has an important purpose and function, but it is not a sign of God's abiding presence in the church for believers. In short, tongues is a real language through which the gospel is communicated and understood as demonstrated, for example, on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-11).*

SPIRITUAL GIFTS – PROPHECY

Note: *Spiritual gifts are given for the purpose of carrying out and completing the mission of the church. According to Scripture, the mission of the church, especially in these last days, is to proclaim the everlasting gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:18-20; Revelation 14:6-12). Undoubtedly, the gift of prophecy is an important spiritual gift that will aid the church in accomplishing its mission.*

4. According to 1 Corinthians 12:11, who gives spiritual gifts, including the gift of prophecy?

"But all these worketh that one and _____ _____ _____, dividing to every man severally as he will." *1 Corinthians 12:11*

Note: *In 1 Corinthians 12, prophecy is listed among the spiritual gifts of which the Holy Spirit gives or distributes to members in the church.*

5. What spiritual gift does Paul mention in Romans 12:6?

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether _____, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith." *Romans 12:6*

6. In 1 Corinthians 12:10, what spiritual gift is mentioned after the working of miracles?

"To another the working of miracles; to another _____; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues." *1 Corinthians 12:10*

7. As Paul mentions the order of prominence of spiritual gifts in the church, what gift is mentioned after apostles?

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily _____, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." *1 Corinthians 12:28*

8. In Ephesians 4:11-13, what spiritual gift does Paul mention after apostles? Why were these gifts given?

[11]"And he gave some, apostles; and some, _____; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; [12]For the _____ _____ _____ _____, for the _____ _____ _____ _____ for the _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____: [13]Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." *Ephesians 4:11-13*

Note: *The gift of prophecy is the only gift mentioned in each list of spiritual gifts recorded in the Bible—Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. These texts highlight its importance and continuing relevance in the church today.*

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST

9. What was confirmed among the believers in the Corinthian church? This gift remains in the church until who returns?

[6]"Even as _____ _____ _____ _____ was confirmed in you. [7]So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord _____ _____: [8]Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." *1 Corinthians 1:6-8*

Note: *In 1 Corinthians 1:7, the testimony of Christ is called a gift. This is another way in which the apostle Paul refers to the gift of prophecy. As we learned earlier, this gift confirms that God's abiding presence is truly among His church. It was to edify, strengthen, and reveal God's will to the Corinthian church, as well as God's church today, until Jesus returns.*

THE REMNANT CHURCH AND THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST

10. What are two specific characteristics of the remnant church?

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which _____ _____ _____ _____, and _____ _____ _____ _____ _____."
Revelation 12:17

Ernest Marter, speaking of the remnant that have the testimony of Jesus, writes, "Some Bible translations render this expression as bearing 'witness to Jesus'. The Greek phrase here used by John can grammatically mean either testimony 'to' Jesus or testimony 'from' Jesus. However, in the book of Revelation where this phrase is used the context makes it plain that we must understand it to mean the testimony that Jesus sends us through the prophets inspired by His Spirit. (Rev. 1:1, 2; 19:10; 1 Peter 1:11.) John is being assured that the faithful ones who observe all of God's commands will be favoured with a further knowledge of God's will through the messages He would send them by means of the gift of prophecy." Marter, Ernest, W. *A Plain Man's Guide to Daniel and The Revelation,* pp. 59, 60.

11. Who did the angel instruct John to worship when he fell at his feet? What is the testimony of Jesus?

"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship _____: for the testimony of Jesus is _____ _____ _____ _____."
Revelation 19:10

12. In Revelation 22:8 and 9, (the parallel passage of Revelation 19:10) what are the brethren called? Who did the angel instruct John to worship when he fell at his feet?

[8]"And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. [9]"Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the _____, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship _____." *Revelation 22:8, 9*

Note: *The testimony of Jesus, which is called the spirit of prophecy or the gift of prophecy, operates in God's remnant church today through the writings of Ellen G. White (see Exhibit 1).*

"As Adventists we proclaim the Ten Commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath; and we believe that as a church we have the testimony of Jesus; that is, that God manifested Himself in the life and work of Ellen G. White." Pfandal, Gerhard (2009) *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide: The Prophetic Gift,* p. 35.

BIBLICAL TESTS OF A PROPHET

Note: *According to 1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21, the apostle Paul admonishes Christians to "Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." We are to apply Biblical tests for all who prophesy. There are a variety of Biblical tests that distinguishes between true and false prophets. We will highlight four tests a true prophet will always pass.*

13. Christians are not to believe every spirit, but are admonished to do what?

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but _____ _____ _____ whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." *1 John 4:1*

14. In contrast to false prophets, true prophets will always confess that who is come in the flesh?

[2]"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that _____ _____ is come in the flesh is of God: [3]And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." *1 John 4:2, 3*

Note: *Test 1—True prophets teach that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. Ellen White consistently taught this vital truth. Notice the following quotation taken from her classic book on the life of Jesus—The Desire of Ages.*

"Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the topmost round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. If that ladder had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost. But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8:3), He lived a sinless life. Now by His divinity He lays hold upon the throne of heaven, while by His humanity He reaches us. He bids us by faith in Him attain to the glory of the character of God. Therefore are we to be perfect, even as our 'Father which is in heaven is perfect.'" White, E.G. *The Desire of Ages,* pp. 311, 312.

15. True prophets will always speak in harmony with what two important things?

"To _____ _____ and to _____ _____: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." *Isaiah 8:20*

Note: *Test 2—True prophets speak in harmony with the law and the testimony of the Scriptures. Ellen White consistently did so. Notice the quotations taken from her most important book—The Great Controversy.*

"'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Isaiah 8:20. The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness. Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions." White, E.G. *The Great Controversy,* p. 593.

"The law of God, being a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, must forever endure, 'as a faithful witness in heaven.' Not one command has been annulled; not a jot or tittle has been changed. Says the psalmist: 'Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.' 'All His commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever.' Psalm 119:89; 111:7, 8.'" White, E.G. *The Great Controversy,* p. 434.

16. While the predictions of true prophets come to pass, how can we be certain that God has <u>not</u> spoken by one who merely "claims" to be a true prophet?

"When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, _____ _____ _____ _____ _____, _____ _____ _____ _____, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." *Deuteronomy 18:22*

Note: *Test 3—The predictions of true prophets are accurate and reliable. However, some prophecies are conditional upon the response of the people and/or nations (Jeremiah 18:7, 8; 26:3; Jonah 3:4-10). False prophets can also make predictions that come to pass. However, this alone is not a sure sign of a true prophet! If they direct people to follow after "other gods," they are a false prophet (Deuteronomy 13:1-4).*

Note: *Ellen G. White had approximately 2,000 visions and dreams over the course of her seventy year ministry. Many of her predictions directly relate to Bible prophecy and will be fulfilled at the end. Notice the accuracy of her prediction of disasters and their undeniable occurrences in our present day.*

"In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous." White, E.G. *The Faith I Live By,* p. 328.

17. In what sure way can we distinguish between a true prophet and a false prophet?

[15]"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. [16]Ye shall know them _____ _____ _____. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" *Matthew 7:15, 16*

[18]"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. [19]Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. [20]Wherefore _____ _____ _____ ye shall know them." *Matthew 7:18-20*

Note: *Test 4—True prophets are known by their fruits. This does not suggest that true prophets are flawless and without character defects. Christ alone is sinless. John the Baptist doubted and became discouraged while in prison, yet Jesus called him "more than a prophet" (Matthew 11:2, 3; 7-11). Jonah tried to run away from duty and became angry when God spared Nineveh, yet God used him mightily (Jonah 1-4). Ellen White, like others, had flaws and character defects, yet her messages bears fruit for the Lord.*

"Let the Testimonies be judged by their fruits. What is the spirit of their teaching? What has been the result of their influence? 'All who desire to do so can acquaint themselves with the fruits of these visions. For seventeen years God has seen fit to let them survive and strengthen against the opposition of Satan's forces and the influence of human agencies that have aided Satan in his work.'

God is either teaching His church, reproving their wrongs and strengthening their faith, or He is not. This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work . . . bears the stamp of God or the stamp of the enemy. There is no halfway work in the matter. The Testimonies are of the Spirit of God, or of the devil." White, E.G. *Testimonies for the Church,* Volume 5, p. 671.

"The authority of revelation is in the message, not in the messenger. This is not to minimize the value of studying the prophet's life. The more we know, the better we will understand the prophet's message. But the priority of concern should be on the content of the prophet's contribution, not on the container in which the message is carried." Douglass, H. *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White*, p. 26.

BELIEVE HIS PROPHETS

18. In addition to believing in God, who else are we admonished to believe? What will occur when we believe the Lord's prophets?

". . . Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe _____ _____, so shall ye _____."
2 Chronicles 20:20

Note: *God always raises up a prophet through whom He warns of impending danger (Amos 3:7). This has been God's pattern throughout Biblical history. God has raised up the prophetic ministry of Ellen White, the messenger of the Lord, to provide prophetic guidance during earth's final hour. A resource that will greatly aid in spiritual preparation for the final crisis can be found in The Conflict of the Ages series written by Ellen White—Patriarchs and Prophets, Prophets and Kings, The Desire of Ages, The Acts of the Apostles and The Great Controversy.*

Speaking of Ellen White in a coast-to-coast broadcast on September 25, 1997, the late Paul Harvey said: "I can name an American woman author [whose] . . . writings have been translated into 148 languages. More than Marx or Tolstoy, more than Agatha Christie, more than William Shakespeare. Only now is the world coming to appreciate her recommended prescription for optimum spiritual and physical health. Ellen White. You don't know her? Get to know her!"

SUMMARY

Spiritual gifts are given for the purpose of carrying out and completing the mission of the church. The gift of prophecy is an important spiritual gift that will aid the church in accomplishing its mission. In ancient times, God revealed His divine will and provided guidance to His people through the gift of prophecy. Just as this gift functioned in Bible times, it operates in God's church today. Prophecy is mentioned in each list of spiritual gifts—Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4—which highlights its importance and continuing relevance in the church today. This gift does not supersede or add to Scripture, neither does it contradict the Scriptures. The two identifying characteristics of the remnant church are the following: they keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus—the spirit of prophecy or gift of prophecy. Seventh-day Adventists believe this prophetic gift was manifested through the life and work of Ellen G. White, the Lord's messenger.

19. Dear friend, are you willing to accept that the prophetic gift is manifested in the remnant church? _____

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