

DREAMS AND VISIONS: PROPHECY IN THE LAST DAYS

When King David committed murder in order to take another man's wife, it was the prophet Nathan that God used to bring the king to his senses and to repentance. The interesting thing is that you will not find a book in the Bible written by the prophet Nathan. Christians believe that no more books are to be added to the Bible; that any new revelation from God must be tested by the Scriptures.

But yet there were prophets that spoke for God that did not have writings in the Bible. Was Nathan the only one? No. Consider Elijah, Elisha, Deborah, Abraham, and in the New Testament prophets like John the Baptist, and the prophetess Ana. (Luke 2:26)

KEY POINTS

Notice with me this statement from Jesus: "For there shall arise false Christ's, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Matthew 24:24) Jesus is warning about false prophets. Why would He warn us about false prophets if there weren't true ones? If the prophetic gift had somehow died long ago, why didn't Jesus just say, "Beware of any prophets, or anyone who claims the prophetic gift, for it will not be manifested in those days"? What is the Bible saying here? God has given to His church the gift of spiritual ministries that include apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. (Eph. 4:11-12) These gifts are given to equip Christ's followers for the work of ministry. So, non-canonical prophets are indeed a biblical teaching. In fact, the Bible says that, because the church will need special guidance in the end-time, we will see the gift of prophecy manifested in the last days.

In Revelation 12-13 we see that Satan is making war against the last generation of God's faithful people, the remnant of her seed. And how are they depicted? "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Rev. 12:17) So, God's faithful, end-time people are described as having these two identifying characteristics: First, they are commandment keepers, and second, they "have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

What is the "testimony of Jesus Christ"? In Revelation 19:10 it says: "I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The text is saying that God's Remnant, His final group of people, will have the "spirit of prophecy," the prophetic gift manifest among them.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe in these texts about an end-time people who keep the commandments of God, who have the faith of Jesus, and who have the testimony of Jesus, which is "the spirit of prophecy." We believe that this gift has been manifested in the life and writings of Ellen G. White. Please note, that in all these meetings we have never once gone to the writings of Ellen White as a point of authority for any teaching. We have gone consistently to the Bible. Everything needs to be tested by the Bible. It is our ultimate authority!



God's people keep the commandments of God and have the "spirit of prophecy" among them.



The testimony, or words, of Jesus have always been communicated to man through the prophetic gift. All prophets must pass the test of scripture on both their life and message.

Did John the Baptist, Nathan or Ana have the authority to contradict the Bible? Of course not! These prophets just had a different role than the Bible writers, that's all. All had to be subservient to the Bible.

Thus, as we talk about Ellen White, I stress, her writings are not our final authority. The Bible is that authority.

Who is Ellen White and what does the Adventist church claim about her? Briefly, she was born in 1827, into a Methodist home. At the age of 17 God gave her the prophetic gift and began to send messages through her for the church. This began a ministry which lasted until her death in 1915, at the age of 87. Thus she wrote, preached, and ministered to the church for more than 70 years. Though she didn't start the Adventist church, though she was never the head of the Adventist church, and though she originated none of our doctrines, her role and influence in the church cannot be denied. She wrote dozens of books and hundreds of magazine articles. Among the books are such classics as *Desire of Ages*, *Steps to Christ*, and *The Ministry of Healing*. She was an influential figure of her time, particularly in the temperance movement. She is what she called the "lesser light" pointing to the "greater light," and that is the Bible.

She herself saw her role as a spokesperson for God, and a guide and counselor for the developing work of a church that would soon encircle the globe. She was human; she made mistakes, she grew in her understanding, and certainly she didn't claim all knowledge. She made it clear that: "When God's Word is studied, comprehended, and obeyed, a bright light will be reflected to the world;... The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this Holy Word will be in harmony..... Man is fallible, but God's Word is infallible." (The Review and Herald, Dec. 15, 1885) At the same time, it's clear from reading her books that this was a woman who loved Jesus, and who was given a special gift.

Again, remember, you don't need to believe in Ellen White to know last day events, to know Jesus, to know about salvation, to know about the mark of the beast, the change of the Sabbath, and the Second Coming. Everything we've studied has come from the Bible. Around the world millions and millions of people, both in the SDA church and out, have been greatly blessed by the wonderful writings of this woman. You can be blessed too. Let her writings speak for themselves. We have nothing to demand. We can only share with you what has been our experience, and what has been a continued source of blessing to millions of us.



The Bible is the ultimate authority for all faith and practice.



Millions of people around the world have been blessed by the writings of this remarkable woman.

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

God will have a people who keep the commandments of God, and who have the "spirit of prophecy" among them. Do you believe God's Word? God knew that His end-time people, surrounded by the final deceptions of an angry dragon, would need special guidance and encouragement through the Spirit of Prophecy. The life and writings of Ellen White are just such counsel and encouragement for God's Remnant church for these end times.

BETWEEN YOU AND GOD

God's Word is a lamp to our feet. We must daily spend time with the Lord through Bible study and prayer. May we also invite you to pick up one of Ellen White's books and find the blessing of this "lesser" light, that always will enhance and lead you back to the "greater" light, the Bible. Maybe start with her book, *Steps to Christ*.