

True and False Prophets - Lesson 20 of 21 - Landmarks of Prophecy

Welcome, friends. We're so glad that you're here for our Landmarks of Prophecy program. And I not only want to welcome those who have faithfully come - we have one more meeting here in Albuquerque - just bless your hearts, in spite of that horrific traffic construction that is happening right out there, you kept coming. I just really appreciate your dedication. And those who have been tuning in. People from all over the country and around the world that have been watching and we're just delighted that you've joined us. We hope that you take these programs and you use them to share the gospel with your friends. So we're glad that you're here.

Our study today is dealing with the subject of true and false prophets. We're going to be talking about the subject of prophecy - very relevant in a Landmarks of Prophecy series. Does God still use people to prophesy? Does God still speak through men and women? You know, in the Bible, it tells us that, typically, the true prophets are greatly outnumbered by the false prophets. And our story comes from 2 Kings 22, verses 1 to 40. One of my favorite stories in the Bible. It talks about a day when King Ahab, from the Northern kingdom, they temporarily were at peace with the Southern kingdom. You've heard of King Jehoshaphat? People say 'jumping Jehoshaphat!' King Jehoshaphat was a good king from the Southern kingdom, where they still worshiped the Lord.

And they were getting ready to go to battle with Ramoth Gilead and so Ahab got four hundred of his prophets of Baal to come and he said, 'Come, tell us whether or not we should go fight the Syrians at Ramoth Gilead.' They all said, 'Go and fight and prosper. God is with you!' Four hundred of them - big pep rally before the battle. Well, Jehoshaphat was sitting next to Ahab and he looked around and he said, 'Pardon me, Ahab, nothing personal, but these are all prophets of Baal. Do we have a prophet of Jehovah we can consult?' And Ahab says, 'Oh, well, there's one left. I don't like him. He never says anything good about me. He's just negative.' He says, 'Well, don't say that. Let's hear what he has to say.'

And so Micaiah, the prophet is brought to this big pep rally and, on the way, the soldier tells Micahiah, 'Look, everybody's having a great time. All the prophets are saying 'Go and win. You're going to prosper. You'll win this battle.' And Micaiah says, 'Whatever the Lord says to me, that's what I'm going to say.' So when he gets there and he sees that they're waving the banners and they're carrying on saying, 'Go! Fight, fight, fight! Win, win, win!' Four hundred prophets of Baal telling the kings 'You're going to win this battle. And so they saw Micaiah and Ahab said, 'What do you say Micaiah? What does Jehovah say?' And Micaiah said, 'Go, fight, win, win, win.' And he knew he was being sarcastic. He said, 'Now, how many times do I have to tell you in the name of the Lord, you tell me what Jehovah's really telling you. He said, 'Okay, you asked for it. Jehovah's telling me that I saw the sheep of Israel scattered on the hills without a shepherd' - meaning that their king was gone. And Ahab turned to Jehoshaphat, he said, 'Didn't I tell you he's just so negative?' And so he actually had Micaiah put in jail. He says, 'I'm putting you in jail. If I come back in peace, you're in trouble.' And Micaiah says, 'You won't come back in peace or God has not spoken by me.'

Well, you've got to be a brave prophet to stand up one man against 400. That's what happened with Elijah on Mount Carmel. One prophet of God stood up against, well, there was 400 prophets of Baal, 450 prophets of the grove. That's one man against 850. There are so many more false prophets than true prophets. That's why Jesus warns us, 'In the last days, beware of false prophets.' By the way, it says in 1 Kings 22, "And Micaiah said, 'If thou return at all in peace,'" - he told Ahab - "'the Lord hath not spoken by me.'" So what happened? They didn't listen to Micaiah. They went into battle with the Syrians and the King of Syria said, 'Don't fight with any man small or great. You just single out the king of Israel. The King of Israel tried to hide. He didn't even put on his royal robes. He put on all of his armor. He said, 'This prophecy is not going to happen.' He stayed at the back of the battle. He said, 'I'll be safe here. That prophecy of Jehovah is not going to happen. And it says, 'And a certain man drew out a bow at a venture.' It doesn't even tell us what army he's in. An arrow flew on its own, found a joint in Ahab's

armor, struck a vital artery, and he bled to death before the day was over. Just as Micaiah and, by the way, Elijah had both foretold. 'Heaven and earth will pass away; the words of the prophets do not fail.' The question is: how do you know the true from the false? Alright, going to our lesson with that introduction.

Question #1: To whom does the Lord reveal His final plans? Now this is very important. We're living in the last days. Who does God tell His final plans to? The book of Amos, chapter 3, verse 7, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." Whenever God is preparing to do anything significant in history, He tells his messengers. When the Lord was getting ready to destroy the world with a flood, did He have a prophet that He chose to warn others? Yes. What was his name? Noah. Noah. When the Lord was preparing to bring His people out of the slavery of Egypt and all those signs and wonders, did He raise up a prophet? He did.

And another one when they entered the Promised Land. And several times along the way when they were occupied by enemies. God rose up prophets like Samuel and Gideon and many others. In the days of David, when he delivered them from the Philistines, there was Nathan the prophet. Indeed, David was a prophet in his own right.

Then you can march down through history, whenever anything great happened; when they were about to be conquered by the Babylonians, God rose up several prophets to warn them: Isaiah and Jeremiah and others. And when they were about to come back he had Ezekiel and Daniel. Anything significant God did - before the Messiah came the first time, did God rise up a prophet? What was his name? John the Baptist. Does it make sense to you that, before the climax of biblical history, when Jesus returns, will God have a special messenger to help prepare people for that event? I believe that's so. But we need to know how to sift between the true and the false or we'll be deceived. Because Jesus said that the false prophets, almost always, outnumber the true 100 to 1 - no, I made that number up. But it's - they're greatly outnumbered.

Question #2: Will there be both true and false prophets in the last days? Answer: You can read in Matthew chapter 24, verse 11, "And many" - what kind of prophets? - "false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many." This is an old Newsweek cover from that man Marshall Applewhite, who had the 'Heaven's Gate' group and he said that this spaceship was hiding in the tail of Haley's comet - was going to catch them all up - and they all drank this suicide concoction. Or people like Jim Jones or David Koresh and they had one in Japan that did a cyanide attack on the subway. There's a lot in the world today.

These are just devious false prophets, but what's really scary is not the kooks out there that are on the border talking about spaceships, false prophets in the church, they come as wolves in sheep's clothing. They talk about Jesus, they can quote their Bible - that's when they're the most dangerous. How do you know how to tell the difference? You notice Jesus doesn't say, 'Beware of any prophets in the last days.' He said 'Beware of false prophets.' Acts 2, verse 17, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My spirit upon" - how much flesh? All. "all flesh:" Now when does this happen? It'll come to pass in the last days. This happened at one point during Pentecost, when He poured out His Spirit. But then He goes on to say, "and your sons and your" - what? - "your daughters shall prophesy." And so you've got both sons and daughters are prophesying.

So, are there only men prophets or does the Bible say that there are also women prophets? You've got a number of them in the Bible. Let me give you a few examples of this. You can read about the sister of Moses. Now, it's very interesting, Amram and Jochebed, were the Jewish couple, they lived long lives. They had three children - remarkable children. All three of their children were prophets. Their names were Miriam, Aaron - Miriam was the first born, then Aaron, then Moses. All three were prophets. Only the boys were priests, but all three of their children were prophets.

And it talks about "Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and with

the women she went out with timbrels with dances." This is after they crossed the Red Sea and she sang that holy song of victory - the horse and rider thrown into the sea. You can read in the New Testament, it talks about, in Luke 2, verse 36, "And there was one Anna, a" - what? - "a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher: she was of great age." And she ministered in the temple when Jesus was brought as a baby. She prophesied over Christ. You had Huldah, in the Old Testament. You read in the New Testament another example, Acts 21, verses 8 and 9, "And on the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist," - he starts out as Philip the deacon, but he ends up kind of turning into a great evangelist - "who was one of the original seven deacons. And we stayed with him." Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied. So here you've got even a New Testament example of that gift of prophecy. It's one of the gifts of the Spirit. Has God withdrawn the gifts of the Spirit from the church? No. No, you can list those things and they're all needed.

Question #3: What types of false prophets are specifically condemned in the Bible? Now, in your lesson you've got, I think it's like A through H of categories of false prophets that we're guarded to watch against. It says, for instance, A) one... That useth divination [fortune teller]." People that read your palm, that read the tarot cards and, I know, you'd think this was just an ancient practice, but we still have them in the cities. Do you have them in New Mexico - in Albuquerque? Yes. Yeah, there's one in Sacramento. For a meeting like this, once, I took a picture of one of their establishments and I stood out front during - it was kind of interesting, it was purple, had crosses in the windows, but they said they're going to read your tarot cards and read your palm - fortune teller. And, while I was standing out there taking pictures for a presentation, the lady who ran the place, she came out and said, 'What are you doing? Can I help you?' I said, 'I'm just taking a picture.' 'What for?' I wanted to say, 'Well, you're the prophet, you tell me.' But I didn't say that, I just thought that.

Another one would be B) "An observer of times." Now that's more specifically someone who's involved in astrology. 'What sign are you?' 'Oh, let me read your sign.' 'Let me see if you've got a Pisces rising with an Aquarius influence and...' I remember when I lived up in the cave I had a friend that was just so into astrology and I - his name was Adam - his name was Adam Aquarius, he renamed himself. And I said, 'Explain to me how this works.' He said, 'Well, you know, there's these constellations.' I said, 'Now how far away are they?' 'Well, you know, they way out there.' I said, 'You're telling me that the alignment of those stars is affecting every individual differently here on earth? And the nearest star, Alpha Centuri or Alpha Proxima - if you travel 186,000 miles per second it will take you four years to get to that first star and these constellations way out there are directing the life of people on planet Earth? Explain that to me.'

My mother, she was a songwriter, she kind of used to dabble with astrology, but she wrote a song - she wrote a whole album and it was love songs - twelve songs - she wrote love songs for the different zodiac signs. I think it did pretty well. And I said, 'Mom, do you really believe that stuff? She said, 'Of course not.' So a lot of the people out there that are even writing, in the paper, for the zodiac and astrology, now they don't even believe that.

And C) is the next one. An enchanter or [magician]." Now, you know, a lot of these magicians, it's - some of it's really dark and you know it's tricks most of the time - it's tricks and it's sleight of hand - it's illusion and - but a lot of it is done in a very spiritualistic way to make people go 'Ooh ooh ooh ooh,' you know, they think it's real and just, you know, that stuff is kind of dabbling in dark arts. I'm not talking about when you have a clown come to the birthday party and he makes the banana disappear, you know, there's tricks and things that happen, but magicians - like there's a magician in the New Testament who deceived people with the wonders he was able to do. And when he saw the disciples laying hands - his name was Simon - he saw the disciples laying hands on people and they got the Holy Spirit, he asked Peter - offered Peter money for that power. Peter said, 'Your money perish with you to think you could buy the gift of the Holy Spirit.' But he had been using tricks to deceive people - to get their attention and

control them. God says don't do that. And, by the way, if you're out visiting a so-called prophet and you have to pay for your prophecy, that's suspicious. I don't ever remember anyone going to Elijah and Elijah saying, 'Thus saith the Lord! Just a second, let me get your credit card and I'll give you my prophecy.' Matter of fact, you can't pay a true prophet not to give you a prophecy. It's - the Lord is telling them to give it, they're going to give it whether they get an offering or not, because it's a message from the Lord. But, you know, a lot of these - a lot of flim-flam religions out there that are abusing the Christian truth.

Answer D) "A witch." Which would be a - basically a female psychic. And, you know, that's a person who's kind of conjuring spells and they're mixing things and they're casting spells and pronouncing curses and - the Bible's very clear, they supposedly communicate with the dead, which borders into another category - Saul went to see a witch and he died the next day. So - but someone says, 'Well they're the bad witches, but I just only visit the white witches, like Wizard of Oz or something. There's no such thing. There's no good witches.

Alright, answer E) is "A charmer [person who casts spells or charms]." And someone who's - say, you know, they get their little effigies and their voo-doo dolls, they're casting spells and they're developing potions and that's all from the devil.

Answer F) it says, "A consulter with familiar spirits [spirit medium]." So somebody who says that they're able to communicate with the dead, the Bible calls this evil. We're to have nothing to do with that. That's from the devil. That's what that witch was trying to do. The Bible tells us that 'Why should the living try to talk to the dead?' You're opening yourself up for communication with devils when you get on that kind of familiar ground.

Then category G) "A wizard." Who's basically just a male, excuse me, a wizard is basically a male witch. And that's also forbidden in the Bible. By the way, for many of these things, God felt so strongly about it that there was a death penalty pronounced.

And then "A necromancer" is answer H) - a person who claims to consult with the dead.

Now I'm not as worried when I'm talking to you about these things. Hopefully you know to stay away from all of these dark arts. The Bible says we should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. A lot of TV programs and movies have these themes woven through them - the Spiritualism. Talk about Christianity they're not interested. But if you can talk to the dead and you can get little messages or impressions from the dead and someone's going to cast a spell or they've got a lucky charm that has special powers or a stone or something like that. People put a lot of credibility in these goofy things. I'm not as worried about that as I am the false prophets that are in the church.

Some claim to be able to heal. You've probably seen that. And they do all these - they carry on all these antics. Of course, they say, you know, they make a big emphasis on your sending money to their ministry and they carry on a lot - a lot of false things. And I - have you ever seen where Jesus, when He was preaching, said, 'Just a moment, the Lord is telling Me - there's somebody out there - you've got pain in your lower back and the Lord wants to heal you right now, if you come forward.' Have you ever seen television evangelists do some of that stuff? Let me ask you - a show of hands - how many of you struggle with pain in your lower back? Let me see your hands. I don't have to be a prophet to throw that one out there, do I? But, you know, there are some people that they're thinking to themselves, 'How did he know?'

Or you'll - you'll see this, you know, false prophets and they'll be going, 'There's somebody out there - the Lord's telling me you're having problems in your marriage and God wants to heal your marriage right now.' I won't ask for a show of hands, but how many might be having problems in their marriage? And I'm a pastor and I know what the statistics are. And so they say these things and some people go, 'Wow, how did he know?' And then they go through these dubious healings. Some of it, you know, Jesus healed people before and every time Jesus healed someone, He never, ever said, 'My faith made you whole.'

Are you aware of that? It's not the faith of Christ that made them whole. He always said, 'Your faith has made you whole. So God has given to all men a measure of faith.'

Prophets, or even false prophets, can exploit and take advantage of sincere people. And they'll have a healing service and tell people to come forth and say, 'God has told me right now He wants you to throw away your glasses' and he lays hands on him and he shocks him with a little zapper or something and they go... He says, 'You've been healed now. You can see!' And they believe it and, at least for awhile - the mind has a tremendous power over the body. Their pain could be gone. They say, 'Wow, it is gone.' Or their eyes can seem clear - everything looks sharper for awhile. They'll throw away their glasses. They've done studies on these bogus healing services. And some people really do feel relief at least temporarily. But then they interview them a few days later. They're back looking for glasses again. They're taking medication for their sore back or whatever that problem was. But at least their faith - and the false prophets play upon that. I think the devil helps them too. So you've got to be careful. Be on your guard. Even if they do signs and wonders, don't believe.

Question #4: Will God's end-time church have the gift of prophecy? This is our real study for today. We were reading Revelation 12:17 during our question time and it says the dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed - two outstanding characteristics - it says that she keeps - that they keep the commandments of God and have what? The testimony of Jesus Christ. Now what is the testimony of Jesus? I love the Bible because you let the Bible interpret itself.

You go to Revelation 19:10 - John falls down to worship the angel, the angel says, 'Don't do that.' He says, 'I am of thy fellow servants and of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. And he says, 'Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is what? The Spirit of prophecy. So two characteristics - she keeps the commandments of God - that would be all ten, right? God's church in the last days? Not just eight - some churches leave out the one about idolatry. Some churches leave out the one about the Sabbath. God's people in the last days are going to believe in all ten that's the way God gave them - and she has the gift of prophecy. That means all the gifts of the Spirit including the manifestation of prophecy is going to be in the church in the last days. You know what it says in Malachi chapter 4 - we read this last night, "Behold I will send you" - who? - "Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Doesn't it sound like just before the Lord comes back there is going to be the gift of prophecy still?

So the reason I set this up this way is because I am like you. If someone comes up to me and they say, 'I want you to know I'm a prophet of God.' How many of you agree automatically you would be suspicious there's something wrong with that person. Come on, 'fess up. You know why? Because 400 to 1 they're false prophets - maybe more than that. But you know what the danger is? Biblically God says, 'Watch out for the false prophets because there will also be true prophets. Otherwise Jesus would have said, 'In the last days, don't believe any prophets.' He doesn't say that. He says, 'Watch out for the false ones.' Jesus has never, ever said 'I am withdrawing the gift of prophecy from the church.' He says the opposite.

So has God sent a prophet in modern times into the world? I think there have been. One in particular I'd like to tell you about today, that I believe was a prophet, is a person by the name of Ellen G. White. How many of you have heard this name before? Now you should know that when I became convinced that Ellen White was a prophet, I had never been to a Seventh-day Adventist Church. I was up in the mountains, accepted Jesus, living in a cave, read the Bible, went to church with many different Christians - mostly Evangelical churches, some Pentecostal churches. Never heard of Seventh-day Adventists. But I noticed, theologically, they disagreed with each other.

I said to a friend of mine who had been raised, actually, a Seventh-day Adventist, I said, 'Boy, I can't get these churches - they all disagree.' And he gave me a book. But I didn't pay much attention to it right away. It was a book called 'The Great Controversy.' So I went back to my cave and I prayed and I said, 'Lord, there's one Bible, there's one Jesus, one Holy Spirit. All these people, I know they love you -

they're Christians - but they all disagree with each other.' One church would say, 'Unless you are a member of our church, you're not one of the 144,000.' Another church would say, 'If you don't speak in tongues, you don't have the Holy Spirit.' Another church would say, 'No, you've got to be married in the temple or you're not really married.' And just everybody had all these different views and doctrines and I was basically a baby Christian and I just said, 'Look, I can't trust people, I can only trust the Bible. Anything that I read I'm going to match it up with the Bible. And I asked lots of questions back then.

So finally I picked up this book this guy gave me, by Ellen White, called 'The Great Controversy' and I started reading it and it was filled with scriptural references. And I kept thinking, 'Who is this guy?' The book only said, E.G. White. I thought it was a guy named Edgar - or something - Evan, I didn't know. And I read that book and I said, 'Man, the whole battle between good and evil, the fall of Lucifer, all of it was in there. All these things - the Sabbath - I thought 'How come I didn't spot that? I'm half Jewish - I should have known that. And I just said, 'Whoever wrote this is a prophet. It was so inspired. It was so biblical it was lifting up Christ - never talks about herself. Always talks about lifting up Jesus. And I said, do you have any more books by this guy? He said, 'Well, actually, it's a lady. I said, 'Really?' 'Ellen G. White.' I said, 'I'd like to talk to her.' He said, 'Well, you're a little late. She died a few years ago.'

But I started reading the things she said and I found out - I thought, where in the world have I been? She wrote more - let me give you a few statistics real quick, just about some of the prodigious writing that Ellen White has done. She wrote more books - 'The most translated woman writer in the entire history of literature.' That right there ought to get your attention. 'The most translated American author of either gender.' The most translated American author male or female. Her writings cover everything including religion, education, social relationships, evangelism, prophecy, nutrition. Her masterpiece 'Steps to Christ' has been translated in 140 languages. By the way, that was printed by Fleming Revell - the same printers who also printed the books of Dwight Moody. And just an outstanding spirit-filled person.

At twelve - when she - she only had three grades of education, that ought to tell you something - and yet she wrote more than virtually any woman in modern times - had an accident - had a twin sister - coming home from school she got hit and it broke her nose. And her health - she struggled with her health. By the time she was 17 she was part of this Millerite movement, looking forward to the second coming of Jesus and Jesus didn't come, obviously. And they were all devastated - they were Methodists, and she, at 17, received a vision that talked about the journey of God's people and that - how the Lord was still with His people. He wanted them to come together from many different churches and be one people again that got back to the Bible. From 17 to 87, over a period of years, she had 2,000 dreams and visions that all matched up with the Bible. And it grew from a handful of people to now about 17 or 18 million around the world. The Bible says, 'You'll know them by their fruits. Let's go back to our lesson and see if you apply the tests of a prophet, if it fits.

Question #5: in what ways does God speak to a true prophet? Now a number of things are given in the Bible. One it says - Numbers 12, verse and 8, "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself know unto him in a vision," So one of the ways God speaks to a prophet is through what? A vision. A vision. Second thing it says, "and will speak unto him in a" dream. "A dream." You can read about the vision of Revelation. When Joseph slept he had a dream. The Bible talks about when Jacob slept he dreamt about that ladder. God spoke to him in a dream. It also says that "with him will I speak mouth to mouth." When God spoke to Isaiah he spoke to him. God spoke to Abraham face to face - mouth to mouth. And sometimes God spoke through angels. You'll find one example of that in Zechariah 4, verse 1, it says, "And the" - what? - "the angel talked with me came again," - many times God talked to prophets through angels - "and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep." And as I mentioned a moment ago, during her life, 70 years of public ministry - interesting biblical number - Ellen white received 2,000 visions. God spoke to her through angels, He spoke to her through dreams. He spoke to her through visions.

And Jesus spoke to her face to face. She actually had Jesus speak to her. And everything she sees and she writes and she read - it all corresponds with Scripture. That, to me, is one of the biggest tests. Matter of fact, she had so many visions - over 2,000 visions in public - many, many times they were observed and one man J.F. Loughborough, he wrote down a list of what he observed. He saw her in vision many times. Let me just read some of his notes to you. "Immediately preceding a vision, both Mrs. White and others in the room experience a deep sense of the presence of God. As the vision began, Ellen white would exclaim, 'Glory!' Or 'Glory to God!' At times she'd repeat it. She experienced a loss of physical strength. She sometimes would collapse or seem like she was fainting. But then she would awaken and stand and manifest supernatural strength." Her hands would be moving gracefully and a man that might be standing there would try and grab her hand and she could just throw him around the room like he was a rag doll. And so nothing could stop what she was doing.

It's like she was made of iron at that time. "She would have supernatural strength." By the way, this happened to biblical prophets too, when you read about it. "She did not breathe but her heartbeat continued normally." They'd put a candle in front of her face. They'd put a mirror in front of her face - and she would not breathe the whole time she was in vision. And some of her visions lasted, you know, twenty minutes - half an hour or longer. Did not breathe. People who thought she was a fraud would examine her in vision and they'd walk away with the blood drained from their faces. They said, 'She's not breathing.' And yet she's moving around - heart was beating. When Bible prophets were in vision it says, "And no breath was in me." Occasionally she would give exclamations, indicating the scenes that were presented to her. She'd kind of gasp and talk a little bit. Her eyes were open, but not with a vacant stare - as if she was watching intently things that she saw. Her position might vary. At times she was seated, at times reclining. At times she walked about the room and made graceful gestures as she spoke of matters presented. She was absolutely unconscious of what was occurring about her. She neither saw, heard, felt, or perceived in any way, her immediate surroundings - she neither felt...in any way her immediate surroundings or what was happening in the room.

At the close of the vision it was indicated by a deep inhalation" - she'd finally start breathing again - "followed about by a minute - one after another by a minute and very soon her natural breathing resumed. Immediately after the vision, all seemed very dark to her." Sometimes she would say, 'Dark, dark.' "Within a short time she regained her natural strength and abilities." But this happened to her thousands of times and whenever she came out she would write and talk about what she had seen. Sometimes it would take her awhile to be able to recall. She didn't even know what happened to her. And then the Lord would speak to her and she would write these things down and the evidence is in what she wrote - that it all came true. Her prophecies came true. Let me get back on - into our lesson or I can kind of get carried away without finishing the study.

Question #6: Are miracles a definite evidence of a true prophet? Can you go by miracles? Can the devil work miracles? Will the devil work miracles? Yes. Revelation 16:14, "For they are the spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth to the Kings of the earth and the whole world. Do all prophets work miracles? Keep in mind, in the Bible, prophets are different. Do all prophets write books? Did John the Baptist ever work a miracle? Can you tell me where John the Baptist healed anybody? Cast out devils? It never says John the Baptist - John the Baptist's ministry was preaching. Elijah did - was he one of the greatest prophets? Did he write a book? No. Nathan the prophet wrote a book. Gad wrote a book. Some of the different prophets in the Bible wrote, but not all of them wrote. Some of them had visions of the future, some did not. The prophet's ministries varied based on what God wanted them to do.

Question #7: What is the most important test of a prophet? Alright, Isaiah 8:20, it says there, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is" - how much light? - "no light in them." Now, when it says 'the law and the testimony,' what does that mean? All prophecies are to be measured by - the Bible is called 'the law and the prophets' - the law and the testimony - that's this book. Matter of fact, when it says, in Revelation 12:17 that "She has the commandments of God and

the testimony of Jesus" - the church in the last days will have the truth about the Word. Not just a little bit, it's going to be a biblically-based church and truth. A real prophet is going to be going by what does the Bible say? And sticking with that.

Now, a lot of modern churches claim to have prophets. Some of the Latter Day Saint people - I have dear friends that are Mormons. I love them, respect them - great families - a lot of good things. But I would respectfully disagree that Joseph Smith was a prophet. Because when I studied with my Mormon friends and I'd say, 'The Bible says this and you guys practice this, why?' And they'd say, 'Well, because Joseph Smith is our prophet and he received fresh information that overrules the Bible.' And so - and that's a fact. They've got books - 'Pearl of Great Price' and others and they say 'Well, yes, we know that biblically Saturday is the seventh day, but Joseph Smith said it's now been changed to Sunday.' I said, 'Where is it in the Bible?' They'd say, 'We don't have it in the Bible but his writings are fresh inspiration, they're new. The Bible is the old letter. This is new information.' So I said, right there for me - I said, 'I'm sorry, the Bible does not change. It is the foundation.' Same thing - Mary Baker Eddy - Christian Scientists - George Taze Russel - Jehovah Witnesses - The Watchtower. They kind of claim, you know, 'We've got fresh information.' If it doesn't go by the Word of God, they're not a prophet. It's got to go by the law and the testimony. Ellen White continually said, 'Go by the Bible, not by me. Anything I say will just simply be an inspired magnifying glass of what God already says.' She said 'If I said anything that doesn't go with the Bible, you go with the Bible.' So she never put her writings on an equal level or above the Bible.

We're not to add to or take away from the Word of God. But that doesn't mean God doesn't still speak through prophets - or a prophetess - in the last days. Here's a quote from Ellen White, so you can read it yourself, from the book 'Great Controversy,' page 594, "The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures." - She doesn't say 'my writings' - "by their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested." In 1910 or 1909 - last time she really spoke publicly at a church conference, she reached over for a Bible that was on the podium, she held it up and she said, 'Brethren, I commend to you this book.' She'd written over fifty books at that point. She didn't commend her book, she commends the Bible. And so that, to me, was a real test.

Question #8: What is the second test of a true prophet? You can read in 1 John 4, verse 2, "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." Now some people out there claim to be prophets and they say, 'Well, I am Jesus come in the flesh.' There are actually people who say they are the reincarnation of Jesus. Or 'Jesus was just one of the Jesuses.' Our Muslim friends, they think Christ was a prophet, but they don't believe that he was God in the flesh. It's a big difference. I have friends that are Muslims. We talk together - and even have some that we study with and they just - boy, the idea that Jesus is God - they say, 'There is only one God and Allah is his prophet.' I say, 'Well, Jesus is that one God.' Because God says, 'Here, o Israel, the Lord our God is one.' God the Father, Son and Spirit, they are that one God. One in Hebrew means unity.

Jesus prayed the disciples might be one. Husband and wife get married, they become one flesh. So there's no contradiction there. And so, you've got to believe in the incarnation of Christ. Did Ellen White believe that? Absolutely. Here's from - matter of fact, one of her most popular books is the book she wrote on the life of Christ. It's a classic. It's probably the best-selling book on the life of Jesus - called 'The Desire of Ages.' You read that and see if it doesn't bring you closer to Jesus. 'The Desire of Ages' - a librarian, years ago, at the Library of Congress said, 'Of the hundreds of books on the life of Christ, 'Desire of Ages' by far, was the best.' So she says in there, "From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He was 'The Image of God.'"

Matter of fact, I printed out one of my favorite quotes from that book 'Desire of Ages' and I thought I'll just read it to you, if time permits, and I think I've got time. And this is 'Desire of Ages' 775 - listen to

these beautiful words. "The spotless Son of God hung upon the cross, His flesh lacerated with stripes, those hands, so often reached out in blessing, nailed to the wooden bars. Those feet so tireless on ministries of love, spiked to the tree. That royal head pierced by the crown of thorns, those quivering lips shaped to the cry of woe, and all that He endured, the blood drops that flowed from His head, His hands, His feet, the agony that wracked His frame, the unutterable anguish that filled His soul at the hiding of His father's face speaks to each child of humanity, declaring it was for thee that the Son of God consents to bear the burden of guilt. For thee He spoils the domains of death and opens the gates of paradise. He, who stilled the angry waves and walked the foam-capped billows, who made devils tremble and disease flee, who opened blind eyes and called forth the dead to life, He offers Himself upon the cross as a sacrifice, and this from love to thee. "

Ah, you just - the book is filled with statements like this - just lifting up Christ, talking about Jesus. The sacrifice of Jesus - and it all matches the Gospel story perfectly. So I believe that Ellen White passes that test. You see, the reason that this is important is because it's dangerous to be misled by a false prophet and it's equally dangerous to reject a true one.

Question #9 - So we need to apply the tests. What's the third test of a prophet? You read in Matthew chapter 7, verse 16, it says, "You will" - what? - "You'll know them by their fruits." Joseph Smith - again, I don't want to be critical, but it's a fact of history that he took extra wives, some that had been married to other people. It's part of the reason he was killed, in 1844, of all things. Mary Baker Eddy - divorced her husband. George Taze Russel - divorced his wife. Ellen White - married one husband, had four boys, two of them died - one died in infancy and one died at 16 the others survived.

Her entire family worked with her. Her brothers and sisters, they all believed she was sincere and inspired. You know, you might - who was it - Lincoln that said, 'You can fool all of the people some of the time and you can fool some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time.' And I would add, the hardest people to fool are your own family. And those who knew her best and lived with her said she was absolutely the real deal. She practiced what she preached.

Her neighbors - they said she was the most loving person, coming over, taking care of the sick. The obituary that was written when she died, in the papers there in Elmshaven, talked about what a consistent Christian woman she was. And so her life bore that fruit. Not only that, just the prodigious amount of writing that she did. The American Library of Congress, I think I already quoted some of this to you, recognized Ellen white as the fourth most translated author in the world, the most translated female author in the world; and the most translated American author in the world.

She wrote like 5 million words and thousands of pages. Something else that I thought was interesting is that George Barna - you've heard of the Barna Research Group? They did a survey in 2005 about what were the sources of inspiring material for pastors in North America. Very interesting - this is a direct quote, "The under-40 pastors" those that were 40 and under - "championed several authors who ...included business consultant James Collins, seminary professor Thom Rainer, nineteenth century Seventh-day Adventist icon Ellen White, and Pastor John Ortberg." - as their favorite sources. And that's - this isn't all Seventh-day Adventist pastors. It's talking about Evangelical, Christian, Catholic pastors across the board.

And I could start naming names to you of some famous preachers right now, and they would admit that they have Ellen White's books in their library. Because her commentary on the Bible - it's called 'The Conflict of the Ages' series, where she starts with 'Patriarchs and Prophets' - the origin of sin, the fall of the devil, the creation of the world - beautiful book - all the way through to 'The Great Controversy', the life of Christ - 'Acts of the Apostles' - it is one of the most beautiful incredible inspired commentaries on the Bible. This lady, with a third-grade education, she knew her Bible like nobody you've ever seen. I'll tell you. And she just - on such a broad spectrum of information.

Now, the other fruit is the fruit of a person's life. The Lord gave her visions on education. She said, 'We need to have Christian schools that will be educating people for service to Christ. And she said, 'God is raising up this church and it's going to have schools around the world.' Right now, because of Ellen White and the guidance that she gave, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has 6,966 schools and that number's growing all the time around the world - second only, as far as religious schools - to the Roman Catholic church.

She had all these inspirational visions about healthful living. She said Christians have lost this. Now, you've got to know, when she had her first vision on health, she ate - she was like a tiger, she ate almost nothing but meat. Then God gave her a vision and said, 'This is not good for you.' She didn't want to change, but God gave it to her. And she started to turn toward a vegetarian diet and she said the best health in her life came in the latter years of her life, when she discovered the benefits of biblical eating - giving up unclean foods and eating a more biblical diet.

And she started giving all this counsel on healthful living. They established clinics and sanitariums. You can blame Seventh-day Adventists for corn flakes. You've probably heard of the Battle Creek cereal companies. Even Post Grape Nuts - C.W. Post went to a Seventh-day Adventist sanitarium run by man named John Harvey Kellogg. He learned there about their malted barley cereal. Nobody ate breakfast cereal back then. They ate bacon and eggs for breakfast. And he said, 'This is pretty good.' And he started Post Grape Nuts in competition with Kellogg's Corn Flakes. Well, it was actually started by Kellogg's brother and it turned into not only a health-food industry - one of the biggest health-food companies in the world is Sanitarium Foods, started by Seventh-day Adventists in Australia.

But she gave all this health information. Now 167 hospitals and sanitariums around the world, and they can trace back the inspiration for their health - Loma Linda University - Karen went to school there, actually - is one of the premier institutions around the world for health. Publishing - she talked about how we need to publish and distribute and get the work out - 65 publishing houses and branches around the world. And so, it's not just a person who has big talk, but the information that God gave her and He said these things are going to go around the world, it happened. You know, it's like Christ. You know, one reason I know Jesus was a prophet? If a carpenter that lived - thirty years old - never traveled more than a hundred miles from the place of His birth - and He said 'The words that I speak are going to go to the ends of the earth.' That's a pretty bold claim for a carpenter. But have the words of Jesus gone to the end of the earth? Was His prophecy true? And He said, 'This Gospel will be preached into all of the world.' 'Heaven and earth will pass away,' He said, 'My words will not pass away.' And they haven't. We still have them today. That's a pretty outrageous claim. But He was a true prophet.

Let me give you some examples of some of the statements that Ellen White made and how they end up being fulfilled. She said, the "Appetite for tobacco is self-destructive. It leads to a craving for something stronger, fermented wines and liquors, all of which are intoxicating." Now, you realize that when she said that, doctors were prescribing tobacco for lung ailments. She said it was a terrible poison and they thought that she was a fanatic. Do we all know that she was right now? Medical sciences endorse that. Children who use tobacco are more likely to go on to use it in sequence alcohol, marijuana, and then other illegal drugs. She said that tobacco leads to the other things and that's exactly what science is supporting.

Another Ellen White statement: she says, "Lately I have read... Of the death of many men...their death is almost always attributed to failure of the heart, but in reality ...the use of tobacco and liquor had poisoned the system [of many of them]..." We know now, that tobacco can help contribute to heart disease and the constricting of the arteries, and alcohol as well. Medical science speaks and it endorses that. Every year, as many as 300,000 cardiovascular disease deaths are the direct result of cigarette smoking. Ellen White's words: "Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables...impart a vigor of intellect, that [is] not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet." Medical science speaks to support that: meat

contains a substance that impairs brain activity and lacks a substance that the brain needs to function well. Now everybody's hearing about the benefits of the omegas and the natural things for our health and for our minds.

Another statement - and this is from a book she wrote called 'Testimonies, Volume 8' - my clicker is jumping back and forth here - "Years ago the Lord gave me special directions that buildings should be erected in various places in America, Europe, and other lands, for the publication of literature containing the light of present truth. ...from our books and papers bright beams of light are to shine forth to enlighten the world in regard to present truth." She said, 'The Lord's shown me this.' Well now, the publishing houses, - I showed you - 165 around the world. These books and writings, even these messages - if she was alive today, she'd be talking about television. They didn't have it back then. It's going around the world. She said this message is going to go around the world like beams of light. Now, it says in 2 Chronicles 20:20, "Believe in the Lord God, and you will be established; believe His prophets, and you will prosper."

I'll just give you a personal testimony, friends. You'll know them by their fruits. The Bible is what I read every day. But I also read things that Ellen White has written and it's fruit in my life as it brings me closer to Jesus, it makes me want to live a more Godly life and love my fellow man - the fruit of it is, I want to just be a better Christian. And I know, whenever you have a true prophet, you're going to have detractors. There are people who say that Jesus had a devil, right? His enemies said He was demon-possessed. They said He was a Samaritan. So you're going to always find critics.

How many of you remember the famous radio commentator Paul Harvey? Karen and I had a chance to meet him years ago. Just a lovely man. And Paul Harvey - here's what he wrote, "Her writings have been translated into 148 languages. More than Marx or Tolstoy, or 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." I was listening to the radio a couple of years ago and I heard a familiar quote. And I asked Karen, I said, 'Who's that? She said, 'It's Dr. Laura.' Do some of you remember when Dr. Laura was on the radio? She was quoting Ellen White and she reads it and she quotes Ellen White. She didn't know who Ellen White was. She says, 'This was written by a lady named Ellen White - don't know who it is but what a great quote.' And so people have been quoting her and a lot of pastors use her quotes - it's just incredibly inspired.

Question #10: What is the fourth test of a prophet? Jeremiah 28, verse 9, "When the word of the prophet shall come to pass, ...then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him." Did Ellen White - most of her time was not spent making predictions, but she did make some predictions. Did she make some prophecies and have they come to pass? Many of them have. She has none that have failed. For instance, and this is an odd one, in 1902 Ellen White wrote, "Not long hence" - not long from now, that means - "these cities will suffer under the judgments of God. San Francisco and Oakland are becoming as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Lord will visit them in wrath." She very rarely wrote things like that. Then again, on April 16th - notice the date - 1906 Ellen white wrote, "During a vision of the night, I stood on an eminence from which I could see houses shaken like a reed in the wind. Buildings, great and small were falling to the ground. Pleasure resorts, theaters, hotels, and the homes of the wealthy were shaken and shattered. Many lives were blotted out of existence, and the air was filled with the shrieks of the injured and the terrified." You know what happened right after that? San Francisco earthquake, April 18, 1906. A few days after the earthquake she had a carriage ride her to as far as she could go into the city - because the fires burned for days - she said, "This is exactly what the Lord showed me in that vision."

Another interesting prediction that she made - some wonder if it was fulfilled by 9/11. "On one occasion when in New York City, I was in the night season called upon to behold buildings rising story after story" - much higher than they had in her days - "toward heaven. These buildings were warranted to be

fireproof, and they were erected to glorify their owners and builders...the scene that next passed before me was an alarm of fire. Men looked at the lofty" - they were looking up - "and supposedly fireproof buildings and said: 'They are perfectly safe.'" - Do you know, immediately when the first plane struck the twin towers, the guards and people told people in the other towers and around buildings, 'You don't need to be alarmed.' - "But these buildings were consumed as if made of pitch. The fire engines could do nothing to stay the destruction. The firemen were unable to operate the engines." And we all know that the fire trucks were just massive vehicles that were destroyed that were surrounding the building - they were useless. And you wonder if she saw these things. I don't know.

Question #11: What three things does Paul command us regarding prophecy? 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 20, "Despise not prophesying." - Don't despise and say, 'Oh, that's a prophecy. I'm not going to listen.' - Do what else? "Prove" - test - that's what that means - "all things." And finally He says, "Hold fast to that which is good." So we're to evaluate these things. Check it out and see if it's true. And test it by the Word of God. By the merits of what a prophet - a true prophet is and what a false prophet is.

Question #12: Whose counsel do we reject whenever we reject the words of a true prophet? This is pretty important. Luke chapter 7, verse 30, "There is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: ...and all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves." Here God had spoken to them - God spoke to them through a messenger. And when they rejected the message of John the Baptist, what does the Bible say they rejected? The counsel of God.

You know, typically God doesn't speak to us face to face, does He? He speaks to us through people. Sometimes He speaks to us through preachers. Now, we're not prophets, but sometimes the Lord will raise up a person and give them a particular ministry - a very unique gift - and I believe that that gift can be found in Ellen White. And there may be others in the last days that will come with that gift. You know what Jesus said is the problem? "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!" So often we reject the false and we accept - we reject the true and we accept the false. That's what Jerusalem - that's what God's people have done many times. Let's not make the same mistake and each of us, honestly, apply the test ourselves.

I'd like to close with an amazing fact. I don't know if you've heard about the experience of Ewa Wisnierska. She was a professional paraglider - competitive paraglider - one of the best in the world. She was in Australia in a competition in 2007 and they started a little late, and a line of thunderclouds came in and they were thousands of feet up in the air. There were, you know, scores of these paragliders and she had a massive super thunder cell develop above her head along with a few others that managed to just get out the sides of it. There was a Chinese gentleman just a few hundred feet from her - professional paraglider - and she suddenly found herself getting caught up in the vacuum of a super cell. These things go up 60,000 feet and she couldn't descend and she was swirling around inside this cloud going up 60 feet a second - just like a vacuum cleaner from heaven was pulling her up. All around her she saw lightning flashing, hail, wind - she was in the middle of the storm.

Amazingly, she continued to fly in the glider - covered with ice she continued to fly. Up, up, up she went. She looked at her altimeter - she was going above 20,000 feet - no oxygen - it's called 'the death zone' for mountain climbers. She couldn't go down. She got on her radio and she called to her friend. She said, 'I'm getting beat up by the rain and the hail and' - she said - "I can't descend." And she said she prayed. She said, 'Lord, please, I want to see my family again.' Kept going up. Finally passed out. Minutes she floated around - they know this now from her GPS instruments that recorded the entire trip and the altitude - 32,000 feet - thousands of feet above Mount Everest - no oxygen - she was covered with ice.

Eventually, she drifted out of the storm. She woke up and she was plummeting to the ground and miraculously her paraglider reopened - popped off some of the ice - shaking terribly - frostbitten - she managed to land and she said, 'I have seen things that nobody has ever seen.' She was in the middle of a

thunderstorm and she saw the awesome power. She says, 'You've never felt so small as to be in the middle of thunder cloud - 30,000 feet up in the sky - hail and lightning'. Chinese paraglider, he was killed by a lightning strike the same day. Nobody, historically, has ever gone higher than she went.

You know, every now and then, God takes a person and gives them a unique experience that they might share with and inspire others. God answered her prayers. She survived and completely recovered. God took a young lady, 17 years old, named Ellen White - He took her to Heaven and He showed her things to guide His church in the last days. And I just would hate for you to miss that. How do you know if what I'm saying is true? Try the spirits. Hold fast to that which is good. Find out for yourself. Taste and see. If you're going to accept or reject you owe it to yourself to at least read it for yourself. I recommend that you start with the book 'Steps to Christ.' And you see if that doesn't - little book about the life of Jesus called 'Steps to Christ.' And see if that doesn't bless your heart. You can probably read it for free online.

But in the last days, God wants His people to be prepared. He wants us to come together as one people and return to the Word. And God has given all the gifts of the Spirit that He gave His early church, to His people today. He wants us to be willing to hear. Surely the Lord God will do nothing but He reveals His secrets to His servants the prophets. Are you willing to be open to what God has to say to you through His Word and through others that are inspired? And I pray you'll do that. Let's pray together and let's ask Him as we close.

Father in Heaven, we're so thankful You love us enough and You care for us so that we could be guided in the last days. Prepare us for what's soon coming on the world as an overwhelming surprise. Help us to be open to what You're sharing with us and bless the remainder of this seminar - we pray in Jesus' name, amen.