

The Gift of Prophecy

1 Corinthians 13:8-10

Introduction: There are some people today who believe in their own ability to prophecy. By that we mean there are people who believe they receive direct communications from God and can relate those communications to others. These people believe they are moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21).

Ellen G. White (one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church) was one such individual who believed in her ability to prophecy. She wouldn't call herself a prophetess, but she wouldn't object to the title either. She made it her mission in life to cultivate a following of people who believed in the present day gift of prophecy.

In this lesson, we will examine the belief in the gift of prophecy as related by the Seventh-day Adventist's doctrine. ("Seventh-day Adventists Believe... A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines," by the Ministerial Association General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1982, pgs. 217-229.)

I. Arguments used to justify present day prophecy.

A. They recognize the prominence the gift of prophecy had in the early church (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

B. They point out that Christians were to especially desire the gift of prophecy (1 Cor. 14:1, 39; 1 Thes. 5:19-20).

C. They claim the purpose for prophecy has not ended because the Church has not "come to the unity of the faith" etc. (Eph. 4:11-13).

D. They teach that Christ's warning of false prophets in the end times implies there will be true prophets as well (Matt. 24:11, 24).

E. They believe Joel's prophecy applies to our time (Joel 2:28-31).

F. They have many more convoluted arguments they use by misapplying symbols in the Book of Revelation to support the previous misapplied passages.

II. They believe in the necessity to test the prophetic gift (1 John 4:1).

A. They use four questions to test a prophet's validity:

1. Does the message agree with the Bible (Jas. 1:17)?

2. Do the predictions come true (Deut. 18:21-22)?

3. Is Christ's incarnation recognized (1 John 4:2-3)?

4. Does the prophet bear good or bad fruit (Matt. 7:16-20)?

B. Were Ellen G. White's predictions accurate?

1. They sight two predictions that came true while claiming "amazing accuracy" for the relatively small number of prophecies she gave.

2. Historical documents disagree with that assessment. Ellen G. White is known for her prophetic blunders. All it takes is one erroneous prophecy to disprove a false prophet (Deut. 18:20-22).

a. Ellen G. White prophesied the world would end in 1843, 1844, 1845 and 1851. She subsequently blamed her own followers for her prophetic blunders because of their disobedience.

b. A true prophet is moved by the spirit (2 Pet. 1:21) and will not lie. Therefore, a false prophet is a liar.

C. Using their four part test to determine a prophet from a false prophet, how does Ellen G. White stand?

1. Does the message agree with the Bible (Jas. 1:17)? Not even Christ knows the end of time (Mark 13:32).

2. Do the predictions come true (Deut. 18:21-22)? It is now the year 2020.

3. Is Christ's incarnation recognized (1 John 4:2-3)? As far as I know.

4. Does the prophet bear good or bad fruit (Matt. 7:16-20)? Lying is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). Lying is a bad fruit.

Conclusion: Seventh-day Adventists must admit that Ellen G. White was a false prophet by their own doctrine. If they won't admit it then they are liars like their founders. If they admit it then they also must admit their doctrines are false. In either case, they prove they do not possess the gift of prophecy. That is certainly understandable since the Lord caused all spiritual gifts to cease when the perfect law of liberty was complete (1 Cor. 13:8-10).