

THE GOLDEN THREAD OF PROPHECY

Revelation 12:17 “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.”

Revelation 19:10 “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 God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Lesson 03: THE VERY LAST DECEPTION

As he stood on the bank of the river, one could see a glaring contrast in his appearance with the curious crowd that milled around listening to him. His voice sounded out strongly against the popular sins and indulgences, even rebuking harshly the very religious leaders the people admired and looked to for instruction. The common people tended to accept him, but the educated class had questions about where his authority came from.

“Who are you? Are you Elijah? Are you the prophet?”

He answers, “No. I am a Voice crying in the wilderness.”

So the scholars consulted with themselves, “He is an interesting speaker to listen to, but he himself says he is not a prophet; so we have our answer right there.”

But what did Christ later say of John?

Matthew 11:9 “But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.”

Luke 7:26 “But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.”

Was John a Prophet? He most certainly was, unless you believe Christ to be a liar. Why did he not claim that title then? Because the work that had been given him, was made clear to him as a fulfillment of the ancient prophecies and entailed much more than the narrow ideas of the Jews in regard to the work of a prophet.

Remember, Israel always claimed to believe the ancient prophets, but they always persecuted, and even stoned every new one that God ever sent to them. What happened to Israel eventually? They were divorced of God as a people, and left in total darkness.

Jesus was preaching, and again the ‘scholars’ are on the scene; “Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority to do these things?” Did Jesus quickly reach into His satchel and produce papers signed by the General Conference? Or did He pull out a pile of diplomas? No, He showed them the fact that since they had rejected the message of John, they were unable to recognize His authority, even with so much evidence before their eyes.

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By rejecting the Prophet because he did not satisfy them as to his right to do the work God had commissioned unto him, they put out their own spiritual eyes and sealed their doom. But what did these Scribes and Pharisees say to assure the people that Jesus was an imposter?

John 9:28, 29. "Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is."

But in the days of Moses, did the Children of Israel *know* that God spake unto Moses?

Exodus 32:1 "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him."

No, the people of his day questioned his authority and right to speak as he did to them. Even his own family did this.

Down through history from ancient to modern times, God's dealings with man have ever been the same; and the reaction of the rebellious to His dealings has also ever been the same. We are told that we are repeating the history of Ancient Israel, and Israel at the time of Christ. Of course we are. If we have any spiritual eyesight at all, we can see it.

Again we see leaders and scholars standing before us, assuring us that the writings of Ellen Gould Harmon White are no different than their own writings as to authority; in fact their own writings are much more accurate because they have degrees in theology, and know much more than she did.

Which of the prophets do we see, that had to have degrees in theology to do their work? About the only highly educated one was, perhaps Moses, and what happened to him? He had to spend forty years in the desert with a flock of sheep to undo the damage his education in Egypt had brought about.

When he went to the people, did he stand up tall and say, "Well, you people know me, you know I was trained in all the best schools of Egypt, you can depend on me to lead you out of here." No. It was God and God only that the people saw in Moses; if they had spiritual eyes to see.

We have people flaunting before us that Sister Ellen never claimed to be a prophet; that foolish and gullible people, have laid that epitaph upon her. Friends, just as with John the Baptist, she was MORE than a prophet. Notice her own words. What did she say of her writings?

"In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the testimonies of His Spirit. There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue." Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 661.

She called them the 'Testimonies of His Spirit'. Now notice this next quote and compare it to the words of John quoted above, notice especially the actual words of Jesus to her spelled out here:

"Early in my youth I was asked several times, Are you a prophet? I have ever responded, I am the Lord's messenger. I know that many have called me a prophet, but I have made no claim to this title. My Saviour declared me to be His messenger. "Your work," He instructed me, "is to bear My word. Strange things will arise, and in your youth I set you apart to bear the message to the erring ones, to carry the word before unbelievers, and with pen and voice to reprove from the Word actions that are not right. Exhort from the Word. I will make My Word open to you. It shall not be as a strange language. In the true eloquence of simplicity, with voice and pen, the messages that I give shall be heard from one who has never learned in the schools. My Spirit and My power shall be with you.

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"Be not afraid of man, for My shield shall protect you. It is not you that speaketh: it is the Lord that giveth the messages of warning and reproof. Never deviate from the truth under any circumstances. Give the light I shall give you. The messages for these last days shall be written in books, and shall stand immortalized, to testify against those who have once rejoiced in the light, but who have been led to give it up because of the seductive influences of evil."

"Why have I not claimed to be a prophet?--Because in these days many who boldly claim that they are prophets are a reproach to the cause of Christ; and because my work includes much more than the word "prophet" signifies.

"When this work was first given me, I begged the Lord to lay the burden on someone else. The work was so large and broad and deep that I feared I could not do it. But by His Holy Spirit the Lord has enabled me to perform the work which He gave me to do." 1SM 32.

There you have it; Just as Jesus said of John, "A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, **and much more** than a prophet."

Just as God and the prophets of old warned those who would make of none effect the messages of the prophets, the writings of Sister White abound in such warnings. It is clear that retribution will fall on any who in any way, work to lessen the effect of these messages from God, to His last days people.

"God has given me my work, and I must meet it at the judgment. Those who have chosen their own way, who have risen up against the plain testimonies given them, and have sought to shake the faith of others in them, must settle the matter with God. I take back nothing. I soften nothing to suit their ideas or to excuse their defects of character. I have not spoken as plainly as the case required. Those who would in any way lessen the force of the sharp reproofs which God has given me to speak, must meet their work at the judgment." 5T 19.

Notice the instruction given by God to another Prophet who was called in his early youth and notice the clear parallels:

Jeremiah 1:7 "But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. 8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD."

Here again we see the clear statement; her commission includes MORE than the work of a prophet.

"I am now instructed that I am not to be hindered in my work by those who engage in suppositions regarding its nature, whose minds are struggling with so many intricate problems connected with the supposed work of a prophet. My commission embraces the work of a prophet, but it does not end there. It embraces much more than the minds of those who have been sowing the seeds of unbelief can comprehend". Letter 244, 1906. 3SM 74.

"My work includes much more than this name [prophetess] signifies. I regard myself as a messenger, entrusted by the Lord with messages for His people." Letter 55, 1905. 1SM 36.1

She always said she was a 'Messenger'; just as John said he was a 'Voice'.

Did she just make up out of her own mind the things she wrote? No, she was as much enlightened by the revelations given her as those who read them.

"I can never doubt my mission, for I am a participant in the privileges and am nourished and vivified, knowing that I am called unto the grace of Christ. Every time I set forth the truth to the people, and call their attention to eternal life which Christ has made possible for us to obtain, I am as much benefited as

they with most gracious discoveries of the grace and love and the power of God in behalf of His people, in justification and reconciliation with God.”--Manuscript 174, 1903. 3SM 76.

“I long to speak to large congregations, knowing that the message is not of myself but that which the Lord impresses upon my mind to utter. I am never left alone when I stand before the people with a message. When before the people there seems to be presented before me the most precious things of the gospel and I participate in the gospel message and feed upon the Word as much as any of the hearers. The sermons do me good, for I have new representations every time I open my lips to speak to the people.” 3SM 75.

Are we safe in assuming that these messages are really optional, and we are in no danger at all, if we lay them aside, and just claim to follow the Bible? Let me ask another question: were the Pharisees perfectly safe when they rejected the messages of John and Jesus and claimed to follow Moses? Notice the following promises and warnings:

“Many who embraced the third message had not had an experience in the two former messages. Satan understood this, and his evil eye was upon them to overthrow them; but the third angel was pointing them to the most holy place, and those who had had an experience in the past messages were pointing them the way to the heavenly sanctuary. Many saw the perfect chain of truth in the angels' messages, and gladly received them in their order, and followed Jesus by faith into the heavenly sanctuary. These messages were represented to me as an anchor to the people of God. Those who understand and receive them will be kept from being swept away by the many delusions of Satan.” EW 256.

“Men may get up scheme after scheme and the enemy will seek to seduce souls from the truth, but all who believe that the Lord has spoken through Sister White and has given her a message will be safe from the many delusions that will come in these last days”. 3SM 83, 84 (1906).

“One thing is certain: Those Seventh-day Adventists who take their stand under Satan's banner will first give up their faith in the warnings and reproofs contained in the Testimonies of God's Spirit. The call to great consecration and holier service is being made, and will continue to be made.” Letter 156, 1903. 3SM 84.

What about those who say they are refusing to ‘worship Ellen White’, or ‘It’s about time we got rid of her writings and just follow the Bible.’ Is it just the woman that they are rejecting?

“Are you betraying your Lord because in His great mercy He has shown you just where you are standing spiritually? He knows every purpose of the heart. Nothing is hid from Him. It is not I whom you are betraying. It is not I against whom you are so embittered. It is the Lord, who has given me a message to bear to you”. Letter 66, 1897. 3SM 84.

Those who so glibly talk of discarding the Testimonies to follow the Bible only, had better take heed of the following warning; a warning, by the way, that is being fulfilled before our very eyes as Seventh-day Adventists are now openly questioning the inspiration of the Bible itself.

“It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the Testimonies. Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the Testimonies, which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction”. 4T 211.

What about those who claim that others manipulated and influenced her writings?

“Even now unbelief is expressed by the words, "Who has written these things to Sister White?" But I know of no one who knows them as they are, and no one who could write that which he does not

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suppose has an existence. Someone has told me--He who does not falsify, misjudge, or exaggerate any case." Special Instruction Relating to the Review and Herald Office and the Work in Battle Creek, p. 16. 3SM 61

"There are those who say, "Someone manipulates her writings." I acknowledge the charge. It is One who is mighty in counsel, One who presents before me the condition of things". Letter 52, 1906. 3SM 64.

Please take note that whenever a word like 'One' or 'Someone', is capitalized in the testimonies, it is referring to Christ Himself.

Some are also making the claim that the words used in the testimony are only her own choice of words in *all cases* and therefore not really inspired of God. What does she say about her choice of words?

"The goodness of the Lord to me is very great. I praise His name that my mind is clear on Bible subjects. The Spirit of God works upon my mind and gives me appropriate words with which to express the truth. I am also greatly strengthened when I stand before large congregations". -- Letter 90, 1907. 3SM 51.

"I am trying to catch the very words and expressions that were made in reference to this matter, and as my pen hesitates a moment, the appropriate words come to my mind." Letter 123, 1904. 3SM 51.

"When writing these precious books, if I hesitated, the very word I wanted to express the idea was given me." Letter 265, 1907. 3SM 51.

Again we see leadership, as in the days of Christ, questioning, "Who gave her that Authority?" If there is one thing the rebellious hate more than anything else, it is anything or anyone that speaks the Word to them with authority.

"The question is asked, How does Sister White know in regard to the matters of which she speaks so decidedly, as if she had authority to say these things? I speak thus because they flash upon my mind when in perplexity like lightning out of a dark cloud in the fury of a storm. Some scenes presented before me years ago have not been retained in my memory, but when the instruction then given is needed, sometimes even when I am standing before the people, the remembrance comes sharp and clear, like a flash of lightning, bringing to mind distinctly that particular instruction. At such times I cannot refrain from saying the things that flash into my mind, not because I have had a new vision, but because that which was presented to me, perhaps years in the past, has been recalled to my mind forcibly". Manuscript 33, 1911. 3SM 43.

There are many things, which those who are waging war against the validity of the Spirit of Prophecy, conveniently, never choose to mention, and that is the unquestionably miraculous evidences that were given publically, especially in her early ministry. Just as the Pharisees in Jesus day preferred to sweep the miraculous evidences under the rug, so these things are seldom mentioned among us today, even by those who claim to be defending the Spirit of Prophecy.

The facts are clear and attested to, not just by hearsay, but in legal affidavits that certain phenomena attended these visions, which were in the early days almost always given in a public setting. It is not within the scope of this article to attest to all these evidences but we will list a few.

As she would go into vision she would cry out joyfully, "Glory, Glory." and sometimes would first be in a reclined position, but would often arise and walk about. Her face would be radiant and her eyes open and looking upward. She would move her arms and hands in graceful gestures in response to what she was seeing, and even though she was a frail and slight girl, not even the strongest men could stop these gestures by taking hold of her.

It is important to realize that she had no control whatever, about where or when the Lord would choose to give her a vision. This is in marked contrast to psychics, who put themselves into a trance, and then claim to receive information. Also trance mediums, when in trances grimace grotesquely, their eyes are closed and there is no radiance at all about the scene.

Then there is one evidence that parallels the Biblical prophets and cannot be truly duplicated even by Satan; true prophets of God do not breathe at all when in vision, even though they may speak. While in Vision, *Ellen did not breathe*; this was documented many times, even by medical doctors. Sometimes hours would pass, and not a single breath drawn. In fact in her first vision, those with her thought she was dead, until they found that her heart was beating steadily.

“Some of the instruction found in these pages was given under circumstances so remarkable as to evidence the wonder-working power of God in behalf of His truth. Sometimes while I was in vision, my friends would approach me, and exclaim, "Why, she does not breathe." Placing a mirror before my lips, they found that no moisture gathered on the glass. It was while there was no sign of any breathing that I kept talking of the things that were being presented before me. These messages were thus given to substantiate the faith of all, that in these last days we might have confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy.” 3SM 38.

Then, too, we have the unquestionable miracle of a girl, who was in the last stages of Tuberculosis, then called consumption, and was so weak she could not walk unassisted or hold a pen steady enough to write; who was given up by the doctors as certain to die shortly; who instead of dying, lived a long life of intense labor; produced four sons; traveled extensively; and wrote more than any other woman, and even most men in history, ever wrote.

“Early in my public labors I was bidden by the Lord, "Write, write the things that are revealed to you." At the time this message came to me, I could not hold my hand steady. My physical condition made it impossible for me to write. But again came the word, "Write the things that are revealed to you." I obeyed; and as the result it was not long before I could write page after page with comparative ease. Who told me what to write? Who steadied my right hand, and made it possible for me to use a pen? It was the Lord.” 3SM 37.

Conditional Prophecies:

Were there statements made by Ellen White that did not come true? Yes, there were some statements made, that certain people present at the time of a certain meeting, would be alive when Jesus came and be translated without seeing death. But over and over again in the testimonies we see statements indicating that if God’s people had fulfilled their duty, and had not backslidden into Laodiceanism, Christ would have returned long ago. Some prophecies are conditional; just as all of God’s promises are conditional.

Were there not many prophecies given in the Bible that would have been fulfilled if Ancient Israel had not apostatized? There were even prophecies given to individuals that were conditional. Notice what was said by a prophet to King Josiah:

2 Kings 22:20 “Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.”

But what happened to Josiah? He foolishly went against counsel and went into a battle, where he had no business to be in, and he was slain in the battle. Did God’s Word fail? No, but blessings and promises are conditional upon the decisions of men, whether they obey or disobey the Word of the Lord.

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“The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short. Thus it has always been presented to me. It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the Word of the Lord failed? Never. It should be remembered that the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional. We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel, but for Christ's sake His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action”. Ev 695, 696 (1901).

Some are trying to say today that she did not claim that her writings were of God; but then too, there are many who claim that Christ did not claim to be the Messiah; both are blatantly false.

“You ask if the Lord gave me that letter to give to you. I say He did. That Holy God of Israel will not serve with your sins. That message was given of God. If you have had, since that message was given, a new sense of what constitutes sin, if you have become truly converted, a child of God in place of being a transgressor of His law, then there is no one who will be more pleased than myself.” Letter 95, 1893. 3SM 79.

What are the real reasons that so many today are determined to downplay, or out rightly reject, the testimonies of the Holy Spirit? The biggest reason lies in a simple phrase, ‘Rebellion and Love of Sin’. One of the main points is the fact that God, through the testimonies, has rebuked the indulgence of appetite. Like the worldly churches that try and rid themselves of the duty of keeping the Seventh-day Sabbath, by rejecting the entire Law, most Adventists who reject the Spirit of Prophecy, do so to rid themselves of restraint that the Lord would place upon their appetite. Like Esau, they sell their spiritual birthright for a plate of food.

“There are some professed believers who accept certain portions of the testimonies as the message of God, while they reject those portions which condemn their favorite indulgences. Such persons are working contrary to their own welfare and the welfare of the church. It is essential that we walk in the light while we have the light.” Manuscript 71, 1908. 3SM 80.

We are living in the very last days. In fact, we are living in the very last minutes of this earth’s sordid history; soon the final test will hit, the Sunday Law will be enacted and probation will close for Seventh-day Adventists and those who have known the message first. Those who have rejected the Spirit of Prophecy, which is our first test, just as the message of John was the first test to the Jews of Christ’s day, will not recognize the second test, the Image of the Beast now almost completely set up, and when the third and final test comes, they will receive the Mark of the Beast, and be the first to come completely under Satan’s total domination.

“Why will not men see and live the truth? Many study the Scriptures for the purpose of proving their own ideas to be correct. They change the meaning of God's Word to suit their own opinions. And thus they do also with the testimonies that He sends. They quote half a sentence, leaving out the other half, which, if quoted, would show their reasoning to be false. God has a controversy with those who wrest the Scriptures, making them conform to their preconceived ideas”. Manuscript 22, 1890. 3SM 82.

We dare not move one step off the solid foundation that was laid down for us by God, just because we don’t like the design of it, or the carpenters who built it. It is a matter of Life or Death where we as a people stand in relation to the Spirit of Prophecy and the ministry of Ellen Gould Harmon White, the one who in our time was ‘more than a prophet’.

“In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established. The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the

points on which there will be a departing from the faith. Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for the last fifty years?" RH, May 25, 1905

"Satan is . . . constantly pressing in the spurious--to lead away from the truth. The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony." Letter 12, 1890. 1SM 48.

"There will be a hatred kindled against the testimonies which is satanic. The workings of Satan will be to unsettle the faith of the churches in them, for this reason: Satan cannot have so clear a track to bring in his deceptions and bind up souls in his delusions if the warnings and reproofs and counsels of the Spirit of God are heeded." Letter 40, 1890. 1SM 48.

A Parable

Picture an army heading for the ultimate battle, should they fail to win this crucial encounter, all is lost. They have been long in the field and some are weary, and many bear battle-scars from encounters with the enemy. When they went into this battle they were given weapons, and a fool-proof battle plan provided by a General who has never lost a battle. They were also given documents providing information on every possible maneuver of the enemy and how it could be countered successfully. They were assured that though the battle would be arduous and long, they were guaranteed victory, if they made use of what had been provided them, and never turned back.

What if during the night enemy thieves sneaked in, while the watchmen were foolishly asleep at their posts, and stole away all the weapons, the instructions and the General's orders? This would be tragic, would it not?

But there could be even a more tragic situation; suppose while they were fully awake, they welcomed strange persons into the camp. These persons were recognized by some as speaking with the accents of the enemy, and they warned that they must be driven away or put under guard. But the majority just wanted something new to break the monotony of the siege, and welcomed the strangers into their midst, telling the others to be quite or they would deal with them.

The strangers then proceeded to inform the army, that they had been deceived all along, and if they really wanted to be sure to win the battle, they needed to discard all the weapons, the reconnaissance plans and the General's orders, and move forward depending on their own superior wisdom to lead and guide them. They told them that all the information and training they had, was now badly out of date, and they needed to modernize.

Then the army willingly and happily threw away their weapons, and burned their reconnaissance plans and the General's orders, and celebrated that they were now free of all that restrictive baggage, and the strangers sent word to the enemy, "Come and get them now. They haven't a hope to resist us."

"The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God." "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony. He will bring in spurious visions to mislead, and will mingle the false with the true, and so disgust people that they will regard everything that bears the name of visions as a species of fanaticism; but honest souls, by contrasting false and true, will be enabled to distinguish between them." 10MR 311.