

Surprising Facts Series 2

24. Prophets and Psychics!

If some modern-day prophet were to arise suddenly and begin calling people to repentance, healing the sick, raising the dead, bringing fire from the sky, and revealing your life secrets--would you believe in him? Should you believe in him? Life or death is wrapped up in your answer to this question. What does the Bible say on this subject?

1. Does the Bible teach there will be true prophets in the last days of earth?

"In the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." Acts 2:17. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit." Joel 2:28, 29.

Answer: Yes, both men and women will prophesy in the last days.

2. Jesus at His ascension placed the gift of 'prophets' in His church, along with four other gifts: apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Why did God place these gifts in the church?

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:11, 12.

Answer: Jesus gave all five gifts for the perfecting of the saints. The perfecting of God's end-time church is not possible if any of these five gifts is missing. The gift of prophecy is essential for perfecting God's church.

3. In Bible days, was the gift of prophecy limited to men?

Answer: No! In addition to many men who had the gift of prophecy, God also gave the gift to at least eight women: Anna (Luke 2:36-38); Miriam (Exodus 15:20); Deborah (Judges 4:4); Huldah (2 Kings 22:14); and the four daughters of Philip, an evangelist (Acts 21:8, 9). The Bible says that God gives the gift of prophecy to both men and women.

4. How long were these gifts to remain in His church?

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Ephesians 4:13.

Answer: They will remain until God's people are all unified, mature Christians--which, of course, will be at the end of time.

5. From what source do true prophets obtain their information?

"Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21.

Answer: Prophets speak as they are "moved by the Holy Ghost." The word "ghost" comes from "ghast,"

the old English word for "spirit," so today we usually say Holy "Spirit." Prophets do not express their own private opinions in spiritual matters. Their thoughts come from Jesus, through the Holy Spirit. Prophets speak as their thoughts are guided by the Holy Spirit.

6. God speaks to prophets in three different ways. What are these ways?

"If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream." "With him will I speak mouth to mouth." Numbers 12:6, 8.

Answer: Visions, dreams, or face to face. God usually speaks to a prophet through visions and dreams.

7. What are the physical evidences of a true prophet in vision?

Answer: A. Will initially lose physical strength (Daniel 10:8).

B. May later receive supernatural strength (Daniel 10:18, 19).

C. No breath in the body (Daniel 10:17).

D. Able to speak (Daniel 10:16).

E. Won't be aware of earthly surroundings (Daniel 10:5-8; 2 Corinthians 12:2-4).

F. Eyes will be open (Numbers 24:4).

Note: Though the preceding six Bible points are physical evidences of a true prophet in vision, not all of them always appear together. A prophet's vision may be genuine without manifesting all six evidences.

8. Is the working of great miracles proof that a prophet is of God?

"They are the spirits of devils, working miracles." Revelation 16:14.

Answer: No! The devil and his emissaries also have the power to work miracles. Miracles prove only one thing: supernatural power. But such power comes from both God and Satan (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; Revelation 13:13, 14). Miracle working is no proof that a prophet is of God. In the last days, false prophets will be so convincing that they will cause billions to be deceived and lost. Jesus said John the Baptist was the greatest of the prophets and yet he did no miracles. **"And many resorted unto him, [Jesus] and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true." John 10:41.**

9. Of what perilous end-time danger does Jesus warn us?

"There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matthew 24:24.

Answer: God warns us of false Christs and false prophets who will be so extremely convincing that they will deceive all except the very elect of God. Millions will be deceived and lost.

10. How can I determine whether a prophet is true or false?

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

Answer: Test their teachings and conduct by the Word of God, which is the Bible. If they teach and behave contrary to Scripture, they are false prophets and "there is no light in them." Prophets must be tested by Scripture.

11. Are certain types of false prophets specifically named and condemned in the Bible?

Answer: Yes. Deuteronomy 18:10-12 and Revelation 21:8 speak against the following types of false prophets:

- A. Charmer-one who casts spells or uses charms; a hypnotist.
- B. Observer of times-astrologer.
- C. Sorcerer-one who claims to contact spirits of the dead.
- D. Consulter with familiar spirits-medium, or channeler.
- E. User of divination-fortune teller.
- F. Enchanter-same as a charmer.
- G. Necromancer-another name for sorcerer.
- H. Witch-may be a female psychic, but also anyone who practices what is called 'black magic' often used to charm, harm or control people.
- I. Wizard--male psychic. One who Practices magic, a magician.

Note: Most of these false prophets claim to have contact with spirits of the dead. The Bible clearly states that the dead cannot be contacted by the living. The supposed spirits of the dead are evil angels, or devils (Revelation 16:13, 14). Crystal balls, palm reading, leaf deciphering, astrology, and talking with the supposed spirits of the dead are not God's ways of communicating with people. The Scriptures teach plainly that all who become involved with such things are an abomination (Deuteronomy 18:12). And worse, those who continue involvement will be shut out of God's kingdom (Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8; 22:14, 15). Psychics and diviners who claim to be guided by spirits of the dead are not led of God. God does not speak to His people through crystal balls.

12. Is a true prophet's work primarily to serve the church or serve unbelievers?

"Prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe." 1 Corinthians 14:22.

Answer: The Bible is clear. Although a prophet's message may sometimes edify the public, the primary purpose of prophecy is to serve the church.

13. Do God's end-time people have the gift of prophecy?

Answer: we discovered that Jesus gives a six-point description of His end-time church. Let's review these six points:

- A. It would not exist as an official organization between A.D. 538 and 1798.
- B. It would arise and do its work after 1798.
- C. It would keep the Ten Commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment.
- D. It would have the gift of prophecy
- E. It would be a worldwide missionary church.
- F. It would be teaching and preaching Jesus' three-point message of Revelation 14:6-14.

It is important to remember that God's end-time remnant church must fit all six of Jesus' descriptive points. This means that the gift of prophecy must be included. It will have a prophet.

14. When you join God's end-time church which has all of the gifts, how will it affect you?

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of

doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."
Ephesians 4:14.

Answer: It will anchor you spiritually. You will no longer be uncertain and unsettled in your beliefs.

15. The apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12:1-18 likens the gifts that Jesus gave the church to parts of the body. What part of the body best represents the gift of prophecy?

"Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer." 1 Samuel 9:9.

Answer: Since a prophet is sometimes called a seer (someone who can see into the future), the eyes would best represent the gift of prophecy. The eyes of the church symbolize prophecy.

16. Since prophecy is the eyes of the church, a church without the gift of prophecy would be in what condition?

Answer: It would be blind. Jesus referred to the subsequent dangers when He said, **"If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Matthew 15:14.** A church without the gift of prophecy is blind.

17. Must God's remnant church have all the gifts that Christ gave?

"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." 1 Corinthians 12:27, 28.

Answer: Yes. The Scripture plainly teaches that God's end-time remnant church will "come behind in no gift," which means it must have all of the gifts, including the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 1:5-8).

18. Revelation 12:17 points out that God's end-time remnant church will "have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 19:10 says that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of Prophecy. Can we be sure this means that the church will have a prophet?

Answer: Yes. An angel told John in Revelation 19:10 that he was John's "fellow servant," serving John's "brethren" who have the testimony of Jesus. **"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."** This same angel repeated the identical information to John in Revelation 22:9. He said, **"I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets."** Notice this time he said he was a servant to the prophets rather than the ones with the testimony of Jesus. So, obviously, having the "testimony of Jesus" and being a prophet mean the same thing. The words of a true prophet are a special message from Jesus to His people.

19. Of what other special significance are the words "the testimony of Jesus"?

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:"
Revelation 1:1; "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. Amos 3:7.

Answer: The "testimony of Jesus" means that the words of a prophet are from Jesus. We are thus to regard the words of a true prophet as a special message from Jesus to us. To bring reproach, in any

way, upon a true prophet is an extremely dangerous matter. It is the same as bringing reproach upon Jesus, who sends them and guides them. No wonder God warns, "**Do my prophets no harm.**" **Psalm 105:15.**

20. What are the qualifications for a true prophet?

Answer: The Bible testing points for a true prophet are as follows:

- A. Live a godly life (Matthew 7:15-20).
- B. Be called to service by God (Isaiah 6:1-10; Jeremiah 1:5-10; Amos 7:14, 15).
- C. Speak and write in harmony with the Bible (Isaiah 8:19, 20).
- D. Predict events that will come true (Deuteronomy 18:20-22).
- E. Will have visions (Numbers 12:6).

21. Did God send a prophet to His end-time, remnant church?

Answer: Yes, He did! Here are the brief details:

God Calls a Young Woman: God's end-time church began to form in the early 1840s and desperately needed guidance. So, in harmony with His promise of Amos 3:7, God then called a young woman named Ellen Harmon to be His messenger. Ellen accepted the call. She had been injured in an accident at age 9 and had to quit school with only three years of formal education. Her health deteriorated until, when called by God at age 17, she weighed only 70 pounds and had been given up to die.

She Served 70 Years: Ellen accepted God's call with the understanding that He would enable her physically and keep her humble. She lived an additional 70 years and died at age 87. She insisted that her aim and work were to point the church and its members to the Bible, which was to be its creed, and to Jesus' free gift of righteousness. Ellen fulfilled every test of a prophet.

Her Pen Name and Books: Ellen married James White, a clergyman, and wrote under the name Ellen G. White. She became one of the world's most prolific writers. Her books, read worldwide, give inspired counsel on health, education, temperance, the Christian home, parenting, publishing and writing, assisting the needy, stewardship, evangelism, Christian living, and more. Her book *Education* is considered an authority in its field. It has been used by a secular university as a textbook. It is so perceptive and relevant that it was once copied by the minister of education of a certain nation, who published it under his own name.

Dr. Florence Stratemeyer, a former professor of education at Columbia University, said the book contained "advanced educational concepts" and "was more than fifty years ahead of its time." Dr. Clive McCay, former professor of nutrition at Cornell University, said of her writings on health: "In spite of the fact that the works of Mrs. White were written long before the advent of modern scientific nutrition, no better overall guide is available today." Newscaster Paul Harvey said she "wrote with such profound understanding on the subject of nutrition that all but two of the many principles she espoused have been scientifically established."

Her book *The Desire of Ages*, on the life of Christ, has been labeled an "English masterpiece" by Stationers Hall in London. It is heartwarming and uplifting beyond description. She said on the subject of intelligence that a person's IQ could be increased-long before experts agreed. She said in 1905 that cancer is a germ (or virus), which medical science began to endorse only in the 1950s. She is said to be the fourth-most-translated writer of all time. Her book on Christian living, *Steps to Christ*, has been

translated into more than 150 languages and dialects.

22. Did Ellen White have visions?

Answer: Yes, many of them. They lasted from a few minutes to six hours. And they met the Bible standard for visions as outlined in the answer to question seven of this lesson. Ellen White had many visions, all of which meet the Bible standard for a true prophet in vision.

23. Are Ellen White's words intended to replace the Bible?

Answer: No! The existing scriptures were never replaced by the words of any true prophet that existed later. Their writings always had to be in agreement with the ones that came before them. All doctrines of God's end time church are established from the Bible alone. As an end-time prophet, her aim was to communicate accurately the messages given her from Jesus. These messages stress the love of Jesus and His imminent return, and encourage people to serve Him and accept His righteousness as a free gift. They also directed people's attention to the Bible prophecies for the end time, especially Jesus' three-point message for the world today (Revelation 14:6-14) urging that they share these messages of hope quickly and worldwide.

24. Does Ellen White speak in harmony with the Scriptures?

Answer: Yes! Her writings are saturated with Scripture. They point people to the Bible. Her words never contradict God's Word.

25. How can I accept Ellen White as a true prophet, since I do not know what she wrote?

Answer: You can't, until you read what she has written. However, you can know that she (1) meets the tests of a prophet, (2) did the work of a prophet, and that (3) God's true end-time church must have a prophet. We urge you to get one of her books and read it. The Desire of Ages is a great one to start with, or Steps to Christ, a smaller book. As you read, ask yourself if it draws you to Jesus and if it is in harmony with the Bible. It was written for you. We think you will find it absolutely enthralling.

26. What three-point command does Paul give regarding a prophet?

Answer: **"Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21.**

The apostle Paul says that we should not despise or ignore a prophet. But rather, we should carefully test what the prophet says and does by the Bible. If a prophet's words and behavior are in harmony with the Bible, we should heed them. This is what Jesus asks of His endtime people today.

27. How does Jesus regard the rejection of the words and counsel of a true prophet?

"For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." Luke 7:28-30. "And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." 2 Chronicles 20:20

Answer: Jesus counts the rejection of a true prophet as rejecting the counsel of God. Further, He clearly states that spiritual prosperity hinges upon believing His prophets.

28. Do end-time prophets originate new doctrines, or does doctrine come strictly from the Bible?

**“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”
Revelation 22:18, 19.**

Answer: True end-time prophets do not originate doctrine. The Bible is the source of all doctrine. However, true prophets do:

- A. Reveal exciting new facets of old-time Bible doctrines that were not obvious until pointed out by the prophet (Amos 3:7).
- B. Lead God's people to a closer walk with Jesus and a deeper study of His Word.
- C. Help God's people understand difficult, unclear, or unnoticed portions of the Bible so that they suddenly come to life for us and bring great joy.
- D. Help protect God's people from fanaticism, deception, and spiritual stupor.
- E. Help God's people understand end-time prophecies which, verified by everyday news events, suddenly take on new meaning.
- F. Help God's people sense the certainty of Jesus' soon return and the end of the world.

For a deepening love for Jesus, a vibrant new excitement about the Bible, and a fresh understanding of Bible prophecies, listen to God's end-time prophet. You will find life taking on glorious new dimensions. Remember, Jesus says He will bless His end-time church with most-helpful prophetic messages. Praise the Lord! He is doing everything heaven can think of for His end-time people. He intends to save His people and take them to His glorious eternal kingdom. Those who follow Him are guaranteed entrance to heaven (Matthew 19:27-29). The words of a true prophet always lead people to a deeper study of the Bible.

29. Are you willing to test Ellen White's writings by Scripture and accept her counsel if it is in harmony with the Bible? Your Answer: _____

Your Thought Questions Answered

1. What happens when a church does not have a prophet?

ANSWER: "Where there is no vision [prophecy], the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." Proverbs 29:18. When a church does not have a prophet to counsel, guide, and lead it back to Jesus and the Bible, the people will flounder in a disoriented manner (Psalm 74:9) and eventually perish.

2. Do you think additional true prophets may appear between now and Jesus' second coming?

ANSWER: Based on Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32), it appears possible. There also will be false prophets (Matthew 7:15; 24:11, 24). We must be prepared to test prophets by the Bible (Isaiah 8:19, 20; 2 Timothy 2:15), heeding their counsel only if they are genuine and rejecting them if they are counterfeit in any way. God knows when prophets are needed to wake people up, warn them, and turn them to

Jesus and His Word. He sent a prophet (Moses) to lead His people out of Egypt (Hosea 12:13). He sent a prophet (John the Baptist) to prepare people for Jesus' first coming (Mark 1:1-8). He also promised prophetic messages for these end-time days. God sends them to point us to the Bible and its crucial end-time prophecies; to strengthen, encourage, and assure us; and to make us like Jesus so we will be "blameless" when the Master returns. Without the help of a prophet, many will be lost through backsliding, sleeping spiritually, and being too busy. So let's welcome prophetic messages and praise God for sending them for our personal good, but especially take full advantage of the work of the messenger He did send! .

3. Why do most churches today not have the gift of prophecy?

ANSWER: Because God normally sends prophets to His church only when it is keeping His commandments. Notice how Lamentations 2:9 puts it: "**The law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the Lord.**" Please review the following texts: Ezekiel 7:26; Jeremiah 26:4-6; Ezekiel 20:12-16; and Proverbs 29:18. These verses verify that when God's people disregard His commandments, He sends no prophet. When they begin to obey His commands, He sends a prophet to assist, encourage, and guide. So when God's remnant church for the end time emerged keeping His commandments, it was time for a prophet. And God sent one; right on schedule.

4. What can I do to make the gift of prophecy meaningful to me?

ANSWER: The way to make the gift of prophecy meaningful is to study it for yourself and follow it prayerfully, so Jesus can guide and preserve you and prepare you for His coming. "**I thank my God always ... That in every thing ye are enriched by him, ... Even as the testimony of Christ [spirit of prophecy] was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.**" 1 Corinthians 1:4-8.

5. Which of these two, the gift of prophecy or the gift of tongues will play the major role in God's end-time remnant church?

ANSWER: The gift of prophecy will play the leading role. In 1 Corinthians 12:28 it is listed as second in importance of all the gifts, while the gift of tongues is listed last. A church without the gift of prophecy is blind. Jesus solemnly warns His end-time church of the danger of blindness and urges them to anoint their eyes with heavenly eyesalve so they will be able to see (Revelation 3:17, 18). The eyesalve represents the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20, 27; John 14:26), who gives all gifts to the church (1 Corinthians 12:4, 7-11). Heeding the words of God's prophet will help His end-time remnant people clearly understand the Bible and will prevent uncertainty and confusion.

6. I believe in "the Bible and the Bible only" as the source of doctrine and guidance for Christian living. Therefore, I reject all modern-day prophets.

ANSWER: You are correct in believing in the Bible as the source of Christian doctrine. However, please remember that the Bible clearly points out that:

- A. The gift of prophecy will exist in God's church until the end of time (Ephesians 4:11, 13).
- B. Jesus' end-time church will have the gift of prophecy (Revelation 12:17; 19:10; 22:9).
- C. To reject a prophet's counsel is to reject God's counsel (Luke 7:28-30).

D. We are commanded to test prophets and follow their counsel if they speak and live in harmony with the Bible (1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21).

People who base their faith on "the Bible only" must follow its counsel regarding prophets. True prophets will always speak in harmony with the Bible. Prophets who contradict God's Word are false and should be rejected. If I fail to listen to and test prophets, I am not basing my faith upon the Bible, which mandates doing so.

Summary Sheet. Place a check beside the correct answers.

1. Please check the items below that have the same meaning:

- Testimony of Jesus.
- The gift of tongues.
- Spirit of prophecy.
- Predictions of psychics.
- Gift of prophecy.
- Conversing with dead spirits.
- Prophets speaking to the church.

2. Does God give the gift of prophecy to both men and women? Yes. No.

3. According to Ephesians chapter 4, what five gifts did Jesus leave the church at His ascension?

- Prophets.
- Teachers.
- Singing.
- Sharing with the needy.
- Pastors.
- Apostles.
- Witnessing.
- Evangelists.

4. How long were these five gifts, including prophets, to remain in the church?

- Only until the New Testament prophets died.
- Until the judgment begins.
- Until the end of the world.

5. According to the Bible, which things listed below are true of a prophet in vision?

- Talks in unknown tongues.
- Never speaks during a vision.

Eyes remain open.

Often becomes violent.

No breath in body.

May sometimes speak while in vision.

Unconscious of earthly surroundings.

May receive supernatural strength.

6. Miracle working is always proof that a prophet is of God. Yes. No.

7. I can know for certain that a prophet is of God if he or she:

Is kindly and gracious in conduct.

Works fantastic miracles.

Is dazzlingly bright.

Seems to know the Bible well.

Looks like Jesus.

Speaks and acts in harmony with the Bible.

8. Which of the following are not condemned by the Bible?

Fortune teller.

Male and female psychics.

Astrologer.

Sorcerer.

One who casts spells or uses charms.

Spirit medium or channeler.

A prophet who speaks and lives in harmony with the Bible.

9. A prophet's primary work is to serve the church. Yes. No.

10. A church cannot be God's true end-time church unless it has a prophet. True. False.

11. What part of the body represents prophecy?

Mouth.

Hands.

Ears.

Eyes.

12. Additional true end-time prophets may appear before Jesus' Second Coming.

Yes. No.

13. What three things regarding prophecy does the Bible command in 1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21?

- Don't despise prophets or prophecy.
- Follow all prophets.
- Prove or test a prophet's words and acts by the Bible.
- Ask prophets if they are true or false.
- Believe, or hold fast to, that which is good.
- Ignore all prophets.

14. When we reject the counsel of a true prophet, we reject the counsel of God.

- Yes. No.

15. True end-time prophets teach new doctrines not found in the Bible. Yes. No.

16. To follow "the Bible and the Bible only" means that one must accept a true prophet.

- Yes. No.

17. Why don't most churches have a true prophet or prophets?

- They would not believe them if they came.
- They are not keeping all of God's commandments.
- They have all the light they need without a prophet.

18. Where there is no vision, the people perish. True. False.

19. A church without the gift of prophecy is blind. Yes. No.

20. I am willing to test Ellen White's writings by Scripture and accept them if they are in harmony with Scripture. Yes. No.