Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*
Lesson 1 "The Creator Speaks"

Read for this week's study

Genesis 1:27, 28; Genesis 3:1-8; Luke 15:11-32; Genesis 3:14-24; Exodus 19:16-22; John 10:27-30.

Memory Text

"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1, 2, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

I. Introduction
II. Communication in Eden
III. Hiding From God
IV. God Seeks Humanity
V. Expelled From the Garden
VI. God's Spokespeople
VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration
Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Neuroscientists are beginning to understand the amazing facility infants have for learning language. By six months of age, babies can understand all the sounds that make up the 7000 plus human languages. But there is one catch. In order for this to happen, the baby must be spoken to. It is God who created this ability for a purpose, one of which is so that He can speak to us. How God speaks to us is what this quarter's lessons are all about. The gift of prophecy is a way God has chosen to communicate with those who can no longer commune with Him face to face. (Introduction to the Quarter)
2. According to the lesson, God uses the gift of prophecy for five crucial purposes: 1) To reveal Himself, 2) to provide insight into events that happen on this earth, 3) to equip the church for mission, 4) to provide spiritual encouragement to believers, and

5) to awaken sinners and call them to repentance. Can you think of any other purposes for prophecy that are not on this list? Since we are wired to be spoken to, God invites us all to listen to what His prophets have to say. (Introduction to the Quarter)

3. Lesson one in this series reminds us that our ability to communicate with God and each other is grounded in His loving act of creation. That ability is also distorted by the Fall. Through prophecy God seeks to share with us how He plans to restore what was lost in the Fall. (Sunday)

4. Read Genesis 1:27-28. What feature of God's creation of humans is unique to them? What does that imply regarding His ultimate purpose for humanity (Heb 2:5-9)? How are the three-fold relationships Adam and Eve had worked out in Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:9? What does God get out of relationship with us? (Monday)

5. Read Romans 1:18-20. What can we know about God from nature alone? (Sunday)

6. Why did Adam and Eve attempt to hide from their Creator after they disobeyed Him? See Genesis 3:1-8. What was Satan's strategy in his approach to Eve? What does this scene tell us about God? (Monday)

7. Read Genesis 3:9-10. How does the parable of the prodigal son reflect what happened in Genesis 3 (Luke 15:11-32)? When did the prodigal son come to his senses? (Tuesday)

8. How has sin changed humanity and the way we communicate with God? How then do you explain what happened in Exodus 24:9-11? (Wednesday)

9. What do the following texts reveal about how God has spoken to humanity after the entrance of sin (Heb 1:1-2; Rom 1:19-20; Num 12:6; 2 Tim 3:16-17; John 14:7-9; John 10:27-30)? Which of these methods of approach have been most helpful to you? (Thursday)

10. At the age of 9, Ellen White suffered an injury that affected her physically, emotionally and socially. It ended her education and caused lifelong health challenges. She was self-conscious about her appearance, was afraid of God, and felt unworthy of heaven. But Levi Stockman, a Methodist preacher, helped start her on a journey toward a more positive picture of God. She came to see God as a kind parent instead of a stern tyrant. She fell deeply in love with Jesus and served Him for the rest of her life. (Friday)

11. Have there been other prophets in the period between the New Testament and today? (Friday)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: Here's a question, "Could you comment on the role of the family and marriage in God's overall plan for us, especially as we are called God's children? Also, is there special significance to our planet in having male and female, the two sexes?"

Graham: Yes, I think God deliberately designed things this way; the sexes, the family, sharing with us the power to create little people in our own image. Then we know how difficult it is to bring our children up and yet set them free. How can we keep them from hurting themselves when they're little? Anyone who has had children, anyone who has been a teacher of little children, ought to be able to read the Bible very sympathetically. I think God gave this as a very eloquent demonstration. Right there in Eden the family, the sexes, the Sabbath, many things in that garden were immediately emergency measures. Some emergency measures can be very pleasant, you know. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #11 with Lou Venden, "God's Emergency Measures" recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/11MMCAG

But in the dramatic and significant setting of the Great Controversy, He chose this time to do it in six twenty-four hour days. On the first day, all He said was "Let there be light." That's all. And then day two, three, four, five, as God in unhurried majesty and drama unfolded His plans for our earth. By the sixth day, what a beautiful place this was! Where now were Satan's charges that God was selfish?

I mean, look at the freedom. He created us in His own image with power to think and to do. And we know from human history that He created us free to either love and trust Him, or hate Him and spit in His face, because it has been done. And He created us able to do it! God even allowed Satan to approach our first parents at The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And He didn't hide that tree in some dark corner of the garden; He put it right in the middle near the Tree of Life, so that Adam and Eve would see it every time they came to that other tree. Look in Genesis 2:9: "In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (NIV)

Of course, the God we know could be trusted not to allow our first inexperienced parents to be tested more than they were able to resist. You know He would not do that. And so Satan was only allowed to approach them at The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve were warned not to risk a confrontation with their wily foe. Isn't that the meaning of that famous key text, next on the list, in 1 Corinthians 10:13? "But God keeps his promise [or God can be trusted], and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm." (GNT)

You see, that tree was not put there as a test of obedience—an arbitrary test of obedience. That tree was put there to help them, to protect them. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was not placed there before sin, but after sin. If it was before sin, it was an arbitrary test. After sin, it was to help them and protect them like every other one of God's gracious laws. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #10, "The Reminder of the Evidence" recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/10MMCAG

And then when God has discussed the matter with them, He expels them from the garden on the very first offense, which if our parents had done, not many of us would have spent much time at home. But we had parents who forgave us over and over. It would seem that sinful parents are more forgiving than our infinitely gracious God, which can't be so.

Then why would He expel them on their first offense? And if He said, "In the day you eat thereof you will die," why didn't they die? What did He mean by those words? And did He mean, "If I catch you stealing any of that fruit, I'll kill you"? Does it say that? And we in all reverence ask our questions. God, are you making things clear here? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Genesis, recorded October 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

http://pkp.cc/1MMPOGIA66 (Part 1) http://pkp.cc/2MMPOGIA66 (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

When Adam came from the Creator's hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. "God created man in His own image" (Genesis 1:27), and it was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image—the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator. All his faculties were capable of development; their capacity and vigor were continually to increase. Vast was the scope offered for their exercise, glorious the field opened to their research. The mysteries of the visible universe—the "wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:16)—invited man's study. Face-to-face, heart-to-heart communion with his Maker was his high privilege. Had he remained loyal to God, all this would have been his forever. Throughout eternal ages he would have continued to gain new treasures of knowledge, to discover fresh springs of happiness, and to obtain clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the wisdom, the power, and the love of God.

More and more fully would he have fulfilled the object of his creation, more and more fully have reflected the Creator's glory. {Ed 15.1}

The Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty it is left with us to decide our course. {RH, July 17, 1888 par. 4}

Jesus employed no miraculous agency to compel men to believe in him. They were left to choose or reject him, of their own free will. No direct power was to force them into obedience, and destroy the free moral agency that God has given to man. {4Red 86.3}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {GC 493.2}

Through the ministry of the angels the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the human agent and draw him to Christ. . . . But the Spirit of God does not interfere with the freedom of the human agent. The Holy Spirit is given to be a helper, so that man may cooperate with the Divine, and it is given to Him to draw the soul but never to force obedience. {TMK 57.2}

Angels of God visited Adam and Eve, and told them of the fall of Satan, and warned them to be on their guard. They cautioned them not to separate from each other in their employment, for they might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. If one of them were alone, they would be in greater danger than if both were together. The angels enjoined upon them to closely follow the instructions God had given them, for in perfect obedience they were safe, and this fallen foe could then have no power to deceive them. God would not permit Satan to follow the holy pair with continual temptations. He could have access to them only at the tree of knowledge of good and evil. {3SG 39.1}

The knowledge which God did not want our first parents to have was a knowledge of guilt. And when they accepted the assertions of Satan, which were false, disobedience and transgression were introduced into our world. This disobedience to God's express command, this belief of Satan's lie, opened the floodgates of woe upon the world.—RH, Apr 5, 1898. {2MCP 562.1}

Those who walk even as Christ walked, who are patient, gentle, kind, meek, and lowly in heart, those who yoke up with Christ and lift his burdens, who yearn for souls as he yearned for them—these will enter into the joy of their Lord. They will see with Christ the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. Heaven will triumph, for the vacancies made in heaven by the fall of Satan and his angels will be filled by the redeemed of the Lord. {RH, May 29, 1900 par. 12}

Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. {MB 127.1}

The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son, bring out in distinct lines God's pitying love for those who are straying from Him. Although they have turned away from God, He does not leave them in their misery. He is full of kindness and tender pity toward all who are exposed to the temptations of the artful foe. {COL 198.1}

Arise and go to your Father. He will meet you a great way off. If you take even one step toward Him in repentance, He will hasten to enfold you in His arms of infinite love. His ear is open to the cry of the contrite soul. The very first reaching out of the heart after God is known to Him. Never a prayer is offered, however faltering, never a tear is shed, however secret, never a sincere desire after God is cherished, however feeble, but the Spirit of God goes forth to meet it. Even before the prayer is uttered or the yearning of the heart made known, grace from Christ goes forth to meet the grace that is working upon the human soul. {COL 206.1}

In the parable the shepherd goes out to search for one sheep—the very least that can be numbered. So if there had been but one lost soul, Christ would have died for that one. {COL 187.2}

The sheep that has strayed from the fold is the most helpless of all creatures. It must be sought for by the shepherd, for it cannot find its way back. So with the soul that has wandered away from God; he is as helpless as the lost sheep, and unless divine love had come to his rescue he could never find his way to God. {COL 187.3}

It was taught by the Jews that before God's love is extended to the sinner, he must first repent. In their view, repentance is a work by which men earn the favor of Heaven. And it was this thought that led the Pharisees to exclaim in astonishment and anger. "This man receiveth sinners." According to their ideas He should permit none to approach Him but those who had repented. But in the parable of the lost sheep, Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our seeking after God but through God's seeking after us. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way." Romans 3:11, 12. We do not repent in order that God may love us, but He reveals to us His love in order that we may repent. {COL 189.1}

Had Christ come in His divine form, humanity could not have endured the sight. The contrast would have been too painful, the glory too overwhelming. Humanity could not have endured the presence of one of the pure, bright angels from glory; therefore Christ took not on Him the nature of angels; He came in the likeness of men. {5BC 1131.1}

What speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible Father. He is the manifestation of the Father, and is called the Word of God. God sent His Son into the world, His divinity clothed with humanity, that man might bear the image of the invisible God. He made known in His words,

His character, His power and majesty, the nature and attributes of God. Divinity flashed through humanity in softening, subduing light. He was the embodiment of the law of God, which is the transcript of His character (MS 77, 1899). {5BC 1131.6}

The things of nature that we now behold give us but a faint conception of Eden's glory. Sin has marred earth's beauty; on all things may be seen traces of the work of evil. Yet much that is beautiful remains. Nature testifies that One infinite in power, great in goodness, mercy, and love, created the earth, and filled it with life and gladness. Even in their blighted state, all things reveal the handiwork of the great Master Artist. Wherever we turn, we may hear the voice of God, and see evidences of His goodness. {MH 411.1}

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}

The angels of glory find their joy in giving,—giving love and tireless watchcare to souls that are fallen and unholy. Heavenly beings woo the hearts of men; they bring to this dark world light from the courts above; by gentle and patient ministry they move upon the human spirit, to bring the lost into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know. {DA 21.1}

He has linked us to Himself by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. This world is not all sorrow and misery. "God is love," is written upon every opening bud, upon the petals of every flower, and upon every spire of grass. Though the curse of sin has caused the earth to bring forth thorns and thistles, there are flowers upon the thistles and the thorns are hidden by roses. All things in nature testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy. His prohibitions and injunctions are not intended merely to display His authority, but in all that He does He has the well-being of His children in view. He does not require them to give up anything that it would be for their best interest to retain. {PP 599.4}

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand.

In constantly beholding Him, we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18. {SC 72.1}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. {MH 419.4}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*
Lesson 2 "The Call *of a* Prophet"

Read for this week's study

Genesis 15:6; Galatians 3:6-9; 1 Kings 18:19-39; Isaiah 53; Daniel 2:46-48; Mark 1:2-5; Matthew 11:1-6.

Memory Text

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me'" (Isaiah 6:8, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

I. Introduction
II. Abraham, Defender of the Covenant
III. The Elijah Message
IV. Isaiah, the Gospel Prophet
V. Daniel, the Faithful Seer
VI. John the Baptist, Preparing a People
VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration
Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Being a prophet is a difficult calling, so God's call to someone to be a prophet is not always received with open arms. The prophetic voice is often rejected or simply ignored. (Sabbath Afternoon)

2. Why do you think there seem to be no prophets at the present time? (Sabbath Afternoon)

3. For what purpose did God call Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 17:1-8, cf. Gen 1:26-27)? Why do you think the call of Abraham is mentioned in a lesson on the call of a prophet (Gen 20:7)? Read Genesis 15:6, Galatians 3:6-9, and Hebrew 11:8. What about Abraham's life and character qualified him for God's service in spite of his flaws? (Sunday)

4. Read 1 Kings 18:19-39. What can we see from this story about how the prophetic office works? How is this story retold in the Book of Revelation (Rev 16:16, cf. Rev 13:13-14)? Why does God allow such an anti-demonstration of His power and character? (Monday)

5. Read Isaiah 6:1-8. What can we learn about how God calls people to be prophets from the call of Isaiah? (Tuesday)

6. Isaiah was not only called to speak to the people of his time. He also received a vision of the suffering of Christ and its meaning that was unparalleled in the Old Testament. Read Isaiah 53:1-12. What does this teach us about the prophetic gift? (Tuesday)

7. What makes the Book of Daniel special is that you have a prophet of God speaking directly to leaders of the pagan world. God even treated a pagan king as if he were a prophet among God's own people (Dan 2:28; 4:13; 7:1). (Wednesday)

8. What kind of results did Daniel's witness to pagan rulers have? Read Daniel 2:46-48, 4:18, 34-37, 5:13-14, and 6:25-27. What does this tell you about how God works in prophecy? (Wednesday)

9. What do we know for sure about the future on the basis of prophecy? (Wednesday)

10. Read Mark 1:2-5. What was the purpose of John the Baptist's ministry? (Thursday)

11. God calls prophets at particular times for specific purposes. Ellen White was called with a unique message for the last period of earth's history. The Adventist pioneers loved the pilot analogy for her ministry. The Bible served the Christian era like a map of the ocean. But that map instructed the ship's captain that when they approached the harbor, a small ship would come out to bring a pilot on board who would guide the bigger ship through the narrow channels leading to the dock. The Bible covered the whole journey through history, but alerted its readers that specific prophetic help would come only at the end of the journey (Ellen White). What was the unique mission for which God called Ellen White? (Friday)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The people thought, "If we offer these sacrifices, it will somehow appease the anger of God, and He'll be pleased." And that's been even carried down to the sacrifice of Christ, that if we point God to the fact that Jesus died in our stead, maybe His anger will be appeased. That's the heathen view. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. These sacrifices were not to appease God. They were to say something to us that might lead us to be contrite, to be humble, to realize how serious sin is, and to say, "God, I really need not just to be forgiven, I need to be completely changed. A new heart and a right spirit, and all those things." If the

sacrifice of Jesus doesn't lead us to that understanding, it does no good. And David was beginning to understand that. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – 2 Samuel, recorded November 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

http://pkp.cc/15MMPOGIA66 (Part 1) http://pkp.cc/16MMPOGIA66 (Part 2)

Graham: Ah. He died in our stead. He died as the substitution. In a way, it's very true. I mean, either He dies or we die. However, that's where the comparison ends, because if God has let you and me and all other sinners die, all it would have done is prove the truthfulness of His warning, "If you sin, you will die." And God could say to the universe, "Was I right? I said sinners would die, and look, they're dead." But the universe would not have had answers to questions two and three that I just mentioned. When Jesus died, there was no doubt in the minds of the universe that God was not killing His Son. They were clear about that. And the death of Christ answers all those three questions. So it's not either us or Him. His death was infinitely more significant than ours. But had He not died, then what else could God do but leave us to reap the consequences and we all would have died. So in a sense, yes. He died in our stead, but beyond that there's no comparison.

Lou: But not as a payoff. It's not one or the other.

Graham: It's not His death is equal to all of ours. His death is infinitely more significant than the death of every sinful man or angel who has ever lived. The death of angels and men would not have answered the questions.

Lou: What you're saying then, is that just a simple "satisfaction" idea doesn't encompass what's involved at all, does it?

Graham: Oh, it makes it much too small. I think it puts God in a very bad light, and it doesn't answer the questions of the Great Controversy. Many folk who prefer those understandings of the plan of salvation do not understand there has been a universe-wide great controversy over the character and government of God. And do you remember at our first meeting, I brought along the evidence that even Luther, hero of the Christian world that he is, could not conceive of these larger issues because he couldn't include the book of Revelation—let alone Hebrews, James and Jude. And this has been the pattern through the years. Not many have seen the sixty-sixth book picture of a universe-wide controversy over the character and government of God. And so they have seen the death of Christ as primarily a plan just to save you and me, for which we are very grateful. It's just that the larger view makes the cross much more significant.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8 with Lou Venden, "The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence" recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG

Obviously Jesus did not die to win his Father. And how clear Paul is on this. Look quickly at the remaining verses. Second Corinthians 5:19: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. . . ." (RSV) Nowhere ever does the Bible suggest that God had to be reconciled to us. Never once! But God paid the price to reconcile us to Himself! Nor did Jesus die to pay some mere legal penalty. He died to reveal the truth about God and the falsity of Satan's charges. And even the angels had to learn this. Look at Colossians 1:20: ". . . and through him to reconcile to himself ***all things, whether on earth or in heaven,*** [emphasis supplied] making peace [not war, but, making peace] by the blood of his cross." (RSV)

As Jesus said in the next verse, John 12:32: "When I am lifted up from the earth I will draw everyone to me." (GNT). Not all men, everyone in the whole family of the universe. You see, viewed in the larger setting of the Great Controversy. The way in which Jesus suffered and died is the greatest revelation of the truth about God and His government that the universe will ever see or ever need. Correctly understood, the message of the cross is final defeat for the adversary. No wonder Satan has worked so hard to obscure and misrepresent and even pervert the meaning of the cross.

But to some of us, the cross is great good news. Yes, it is true that sinners will die, but we have no need to be afraid of God; and He died to prove it. And this message has great power to win to repentance and to trust. Paul was so proud of this good news. Look at his understanding of it in the last verses. 1 Corinthians 1:17, 18:

> For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel [what is the gospel, the good news, about?], and not with eloquent wisdom lest the cross of Christ [that's the gospel] be emptied of its power [his good news has great power]. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (RSV)

Now compare with that Romans 1:16, that very famous righteousness by faith verse:

> For I am not ashamed of the gospel [this good news]: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith . . . [wherein lies the power?] for in it [something is revealed] the righteousness of God is revealed. (RSV)

The good news is that God is not the unrighteous kind of person His enemies have made Him out to be. And it's so wonderful to see all through the Bible that even before the cross God had good friends who trusted Him always to do the right thing, the merciful thing, and they were proud to know Him and proud to speak about Him to others. Look at Jeremiah 9:24:

> Let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight, declares the Lord. (NIV)

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8, "The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence" recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG

The purpose of the plan of salvation is to restore that trust, to bring the rebellion to an end, and thus to establish at-one-ment once again in the whole universe. All of God's children are unavoidably involved.

Some seem to find it disappointing, even offensive, to learn that Christ did not die primarily for them. But unless God wins this war and reestablishes peace in his family, our salvation is meaningless. Who would want to live for eternity in a warring universe?

Without this larger understanding of a conflict that has involved the universe, it's hard to understand Paul's explanation that Jesus shed his blood to bring peace, reconciliation, and unity to God's children in heaven as well as on earth. But recognition of the war and its issues helps one to take a larger view of the cross and of the plan of salvation and atonement.

The kind of unity God desires cannot be commanded or produced by force or fear. In the course of human history, many tyrants have tried to maintain unity by terror and brutality. But that kind of at-one-ment does not last. Look at what has happened in a number of countries just in recent years.

The kind of at-one-ment God desires is described in the New Testament as a unity that is "inherent in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God." (Ephesians 4:13, REB) People who love and trust the same Jesus and the same God are naturally attracted to each other. The same truth about God that sets them free from tyranny and fear binds them together in the firmest kind of unity. Friends of a friendly God enjoy at-one-ment with each other.

This is where the meaning of the cross is so important. There can be no friendship and at-one-ment where there is fear. Calvary says there is no need to be afraid of God. When God says, "Be my friend," he's not saying, "Be my friend or I'll punish you severely; I'll even put you to death." You don't talk that way to friends—especially if you want to keep their friendship. And

friendship is the whole purpose and meaning of atonement. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends? Another Look at God*, 164-165. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

https://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/servants-or-friends/servants-or-friends-chapter-12

But an illustration of God's preferred way of persuading us—not with denials, not with claims, but with evidence—is provided by the story of John the Baptist. You remember how John really risked his life to present his cousin Jesus to the people. And how gracious he had been: "He must increase, but I must decrease." Now John was in prison. He heard that Jesus was preaching that you really ought to visit people in prison; but He never came to see His cousin. And eventually John sent emissaries to Christ. "Are you really the one or not? Should we be looking for another?" That is a sad inquiry. Did Jesus say, "I am indeed the One and I expect you to believe it!" It could have been the Devil masquerading as Christ. Instead, He invited the two to spend the day with Him. When the day was over the two men went back to prison to see John.

"Did He answer my question?"

"No!"

"But what did you see? What did you hear?"

And in the text it's recorded "Jesus gave them this reply. 'Go and tell John.'" Matthew 11:46:

> Go and tell John what you hear and what you see—that blind men are recovering their sight, cripples are walking, lepers being healed, the deaf hearing, the dead being raised to life and the good news is being given to those in need. And happy is the man who never loses his faith in me. *(Phillips)*

And when the men arrived back at the prison and told this to John; John who knew Isaiah 35 and Isaiah 61 that I've noted there, said, "He is the One." You see, not a claim but evidence. This is God's way and the only dependable way. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #6, "Evaluating the Evidence" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/6MMCAG

Further Study with Ellen White

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. {DA 311.2}

The leaven hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God. {COL 98.3}

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. {COL 311.4}

God regards us as His children. He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the royal family, sons and daughters of the heavenly King. He invites us to trust in Him with a trust deeper and stronger than that of a child in his earthly father. Parents love their children, but the love of God is larger, broader, deeper, than human love can possibly be. It is immeasurable. Then if earthly parents know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more shall our Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? {COL 142.1}

Press close to Jesus, and place your hand in His, and He will firmly hold your hand, and never let go of the soul who maintains his faith in Him. . . . {UL 42.3}

By prayer, by the study of His word, by faith in His abiding presence, the weakest of human beings may live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold them by a hand that will never let go. {MH 182.1}

We are to live only one day at a time. We do not have to do the work of a lifetime in a few hours. We need not look into the future with anxiety; for God has made it possible for us to be overcomers every day. {FLB 249.4}

God always rewards the confidence of His people. The way to the throne of mercy is always open. God sees the wants of His people as clearly in the darkness of midnight which surrounds

them as in the splendor of noonday. To look to God for help at all times, this is our safety. {TDG 199.2}

God does not desire the destruction of any. “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?” Ezekiel 33:11. Throughout the period of probationary time His Spirit is entreating men to accept the gift of life. It is only those who reject His pleading that will be left to perish. God has declared that sin must be destroyed as an evil ruinous to the universe. Those who cling to sin will perish in its destruction. {COL 123.3}

Christ was a faithful reprover. Never lived there another who so hated evil; never another whose denunciation of it was so fearless. To all things untrue and base His very presence was a rebuke. In the light of His purity, men saw themselves unclean, their life’s aims mean and false. Yet He drew them. He who had created man, understood the value of humanity. Evil He denounced as the foe of those whom He was seeking to bless and to save. In every human being, however fallen, He beheld a son of God, one who might be restored to the privilege of his divine relationship. {Ed 79.1}

Christ reached the people where they were. He presented the plain truth to their minds in the most forcible, simple language. The humble poor, the most unlearned, could comprehend, through faith in Him, the most exalted truths. No one needed to consult the learned doctors as to His meaning. He did not perplex the ignorant with mysterious inferences, or use unaccustomed and learned words, of which they had no knowledge. The greatest Teacher the world has ever known, was the most definite, simple, and practical in His instruction. {GW 49.3}

Since Jesus came to dwell with us, we know that God is acquainted with our trials, and sympathizes with our griefs. Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners. For in every doctrine of grace, every promise of joy, every deed of love, every divine attraction presented in the Saviour’s life on earth, we see “God with us.” {DA 24.1}

The Lord could have cut off the sinner, and utterly destroyed him; but the costlier plan was chosen. In His great love He provides hope for the hopeless, giving His only-begotten Son to bear the sins of the world. And since He has poured out all heaven in that one rich gift, He will withhold from man no needed aid that he may take the cup of salvation, and become an heir of God, joint heir with Christ. {1SM 323.1}

Christ alone was able to represent the Deity. He who had been in the presence of the Father from the beginning, He who was the express image of the invisible God, was alone sufficient to accomplish this work. No verbal description could reveal God to the world. Through a life of purity, a life of perfect trust and submission to the will of God, a life of humiliation such as even the highest seraph in heaven would have shrunk from, God Himself must be revealed to

humanity. In order to do this, our Saviour clothed His divinity with humanity. He employed the human faculties, for only by adopting these could He be comprehended by humanity. Only humanity could reach humanity. He lived out the character of God through the human body which God had prepared for Him. He blessed the world by living out in human flesh the life of God, thus showing that He had the power to unite humanity to divinity (RH June 25, 1895). {7BC 924.6}

The whole world is embraced in the contract of the great plan of redemption (MS 65, 1912). {4BC 1180.5}

Holiness is wholeness to God. The soul is surrendered to God. The will, and even the thoughts, are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of Jesus fills the soul, and is constantly going out in a clear, refreshing stream, to make glad the hearts of others (MS 33, 1911). {6BC 1076.2}

His angels are appointed to watch over us, and if we put ourselves under their guardianship, then in every time of danger they will be at our right hand. When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, prompting us to a better course, choosing our words for us, and influencing our actions. Thus our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world. {COL 341.2}

Righteous words and deeds have a more powerful influence for good than all the sermons that can be preached.—ML 114. {VSS 52.1}

When the grace of God reigns within, the soul will be surrounded with an atmosphere of faith and courage and Christlike love, an atmosphere invigorating to the spiritual life of all who inhale it. . . . Those who are humble in heart the Lord will use to reach souls whom the ordained ministers cannot approach. They will be moved to speak words which reveal the saving grace of Christ. {AG 238.5}

And in blessing others they will themselves be blessed. God gives us the opportunity to impart grace, that He may refill us with increased grace. Hope and faith will strengthen as the agent for God works with the talents and facilities that God has provided. He will have a divine agency to work with him. {AG 238.6}

The humblest and poorest of the disciples of Jesus can be a blessing to others. They may not realize that they are doing any special good, but by their unconscious influence they may start waves of blessings that will widen and deepen, and the blessed results they may never know till the day of final reward. They are not required to weary themselves with anxiety about success. They have only to go forward quietly, doing faithfully the work God's providence assigns, and their life will not be in vain. Their own souls will be growing more and more into the likeness of

Christ; they are workers together with God in this life, and are thus fitting for the higher work and the unshadowed joy of the life to come (*Signs of the Times*, Aug. 6, 1902). {LHU 276.6}

The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied. While the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, angels will shield the righteous and supply their wants. To him that "walketh righteously" is the promise: "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." Isaiah 33:15, 16; 41:17. {GC 629.2}

We know that in sadness and grief we feel very frail, but we know that Jesus is right by our side to sympathize with us, and He will help us. We can commune with our best Friend; He is right by our side. We need not go into the heavens to bring Him down, for He is right by us to help us. {CTr 42.4}

God lives and reigns. We have a living and a risen Saviour. He has a care for you.... He has never proved false; He has never deceived you. He will be your guide and deliverer in the most trying circumstances. He will be at your right hand. We are every moment girded with His power and surrounded by His presence as really as were the Israelites in the midst of the divided sea. {UL 276.3}

You must learn the simple art of taking God at His word; then you have solid ground beneath your feet. {ML 10.8}

The battlements of heaven are thronged with a great crowd of angels watching the conflict of human beings with the prince of darkness. . . .With intense interest they watch to see if the child of God, harassed, perplexed, persecuted, denounced, defamed, and condemned as was the Master, will look to heaven for strength. Heaven waits our demand upon its resources.—*Manuscript 38*, 1887. {CTr 325.6}

Christ knows our weakness, and to Him we can go daily for help. It is not necessary for us to gain strength a month ahead. We are to conquer from day to day (MS 28, 1886). {7BC 974.3}

The promise is not that we will have strength today for a future emergency, that anticipated future trouble will be provided for beforehand, before it comes to us. We may, if we walk by faith, expect strength and provision for us as fast as our circumstances demand it. We live by faith, not by sight. The Lord's arrangement is for us to ask Him for the very things that we need. The grace of tomorrow will not be given today. Men's necessity is God's opportunity. . . . {OHC 125.2}

We can but look onward to new perplexities in the coming conflict, but we may well look on what is past as well as what is to come, and say, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us” (1 Samuel 7:12). “As thy days, so shall thy strength be” (Deuteronomy 33:25). The trial will not exceed the strength which shall be given us to bear it. {TDG 58.3}

God’s everlasting arm encircles the soul that turns to Him for aid, however feeble that soul may be. {4T 328.1}

God has the world in His hand. We have God on our side. All heaven is waiting and longing for our cooperation. The Lord is supreme. Why then should we fear? The Lord is almighty; why should we tremble? In the past God has delivered His people, and He will be our helper if we will arise in His strength and go forward. {TMK 342.3}

Our God is a very present help in time of need. He is acquainted with the most secret thoughts of our hearts, with all the intents and purposes of our souls. When we are in perplexity, even before we open to Him our distresses, He is making arrangements for our deliverance.—Letter 73, Feb. 1, 1905, to Drs. D. H. and Lauretta Kress. {UL 46.6}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*
Lesson 3 "Old Testament Prophets"

Read for this week's study

James 5:17, 18; 1 Kings 19:1-16; 1 Kings 22:1-14; Exodus 15:20; 2 Kings 22:11-14; Jeremiah 14:1-15.

Memory Text

"Jehoshaphat stood and said, 'Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper'" (2 Chronicles 20:20, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

I. Introduction
II. The Humanity of Prophets
III. Identifying True Prophets
IV. Functions of Prophets
V. Women Prophets
VI. False Prophets
VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration
Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The lesson for this week explores Old Testament descriptions of prophets, which will help us understand how the gift of prophecy works. The Old Testament prophets, both men and women, were people like us; human beings prone to things like fear, anger, and discouragement. Nevertheless, God used these frail human beings to provide something like a spiritual global positioning system (GPS) that provided divine guidance for the immediate situation and also for the future. (Sabbath Afternoon)

2. Last week we reviewed the story of Elijah, who did some amazing things in behalf of Israel. Yet there is another side to that story. Read James 5:17-18. How does it summarize Elijah's ministry in a nutshell? (Sunday)

3. In spite of the way Elijah was used by God on Mount Carmel, the story took a very different turn afterward. Read 1 Kings 19:1-16. What does this tell us about the emotional state of the prophet in the aftermath of his great victory? (Sunday)
4. How do you tell a false prophet from a true one? Read 1 Kings 22:1-14. What is the key difference between the true and the false prophets in this story? Are there false prophets today? (Monday)
5. Read 1 Samuel 9:3-14. What is the evidence cited that a prophet is true? (Monday)
6. Read 1 Samuel 8:4-22. How did prophets function in relation to Israel's kings? Read Exodus 19:5-6. What was God's overarching purpose in creating Israel as a nation? What role did prophets and kings play in achieving that purpose? (Tuesday)
7. Trivia question: How many female prophets are there in the Bible? (Wednesday)
8. Read 2 Kings 22:2-20. Why did King Josiah's men go to Huldah the prophetess? What was the issue they were trying to resolve. What message did she share with them? (Wednesday)
9. Read Jeremiah 14:1-15. What can we learn from the interaction of true and false prophets in this story? (Thursday)
10. The lives of OT prophets were not easy ones. Ellen White had a similar experience. She felt much anxiety about her commission. She had little self-confidence. She had a lot of opposition and anguish of spirit. She suffered from poor health. She thought that she would rather die than accept God's call to be a prophet. But we have seen that God calls imperfect people who are willing to serve Him. But in spite of her weaknesses, she helped found a major denomination, a medical school and the world's largest protestant educational system. It is no wonder that she was named one of the hundred most influential Americans of all time by *Smithsonian* magazine in 2014. And by the end of her life, she had written more than 100,000 pages.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

But as we open up the sixty-six books and ask God, "How ***do*** You run Your universe? Do you ask your children to believe You without evidence?" I find precisely the opposite. I find Him warning us against believing mere claims. Look at Deuteronomy 13 on the Bible Reference Sheet:

> If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder which he tells you comes to pass [it actually happens], and if He says, "Let us go after other gods" which you have not known, "and let us serve them," you shall not listen to the word of that prophet or to that dreamer of dreams. (RSV)

Never mind the miracle. Then look at the extraordinary story told in 1 Kings 13. It's a whole chapter. I wish there was time to retell it; it's so dramatic. About this younger prophet called

the “man of God,” who was told by God to deliver a message to the king, not to accept hospitality, but to come home by another route. But on the way an older prophet heard of what had happened. And he asked his sons to saddle his donkey (you remember) and he got on it and chased after the man of God. When he caught up with him, as it says on the Bible Reference Sheet:

> Then (the old prophet) said to him, “Come home with me and eat bread.” And he (the man of God) said, “I may not return with you, or go in with you; neither will I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place; for it was said to me by the word of the Lord, ‘You shall neither eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by the way that you came’” And he said to him, “I also am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord, saying, ‘Bring him back with you into your house that he may eat bread and drink water.’” But he lied to him. (RSV)

And you remember that the younger prophet believed the older prophet, and he went home and ate with him. And as he proceeded on his way he was met by a lion that slew him. If you don’t know the story you ought to read it. But that warns us that people who make claims that God has spoken through them may be lying to us. And it’s God Himself who warns us of that. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4, “God’s Way of Restoring Trust” recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG

Further Study with Ellen White

In His wisdom the Lord brings those who are seeking for truth into touch with fellow beings who know the truth. It is the plan of Heaven that those who have received light shall impart it to those in darkness. Humanity, drawing its efficiency from the great Source of wisdom, is made the instrumentality, the working agency, through which the gospel exercises its transforming power on mind and heart. {AA 134.3}

In the great closing work we shall meet with perplexities that we know not how to deal with, but let us not forget that the three great Powers of heaven are working, that a divine hand is on the wheel, and that God will bring His purposes to pass. —Ev 65 (1902). {LDE 29.3}

As the wheel-like complications were under the guidance of the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, so the complicated play of human events is under divine control. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations, He that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of the earth. [See Ezekiel 1:4, 26; 10:8; Daniel 4:17, 25, 32.] —Ed 178 (1903). {LDE 29.4}

Never are we absent from the mind of God. God is our joy and our salvation. {CTr 357.2}

You need not go to the ends of the earth for wisdom, for God is near. It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. . . . He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him. He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the intellect. He can give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given you. {COL 146.4}

"Be not therefore anxious for the morrow." Matthew 6:34, R. V. We are to follow Christ day by day. God does not bestow help for tomorrow. He does not give His children all the directions for their life journey at once, lest they should become confused. He tells them just as much as they can remember and perform. The strength and wisdom imparted are for the present emergency. "If any of you lack wisdom,"—for today,—"let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James 1:5. {DA 313.4}

In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, have faith in God. He is working out His will, doing all things well in behalf of His people. The strength of those who love and serve Him will be renewed day by day. {MH 482.1}

It is part of God's plan to grant us in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask. {GC 525.2}

In the humble round of toil, the very weakest, the most obscure, may be workers together with God and may have the comfort of His presence and sustaining grace. They are not to weary themselves with busy anxieties and needless cares. Let them work on from day to day, accomplishing faithfully the task that God's providence assigns, and He will care for them. {MH 199.1}

Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God. {SC 97.2}

It is when we come into difficult places that He reveals His power and wisdom in answer to humble prayer. Have confidence in Him as a prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God. He will reveal Himself to you as One who can help in every emergency. He who created man, who gave him his wonderful physical, mental, and spiritual faculties, will not withhold that which is necessary to sustain the life He has given. He who has given us His word—the leaves of the tree of life—will not withhold from us a knowledge of how to provide food for His needy children. {MH 199.4}

Prayer unites us with one another and with God. Prayer brings Jesus to our side, and gives to the fainting, perplexed soul new strength to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan. {COL 250.2}

God will not give His Spirit to those who make no use of the heavenly gift. But those who are drawn out of and away from themselves, seeking to enlighten, encourage, and bless others, will have increased ability and energy to expend. The more light they give, the more they receive.—*Southern Watchman*, Oct. 31, 1905. {RC 319.3}

In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace—in "the beauty of the Lord our God" (Psalm 90:17). {AG 223.3}

By the grace of Christ, perform every duty that has been made plain to your understanding, and you will be enabled to understand and perform those of which you are now in doubt. {SC 111.2}

The Lord's angels are appointed to keep strict watch over those who put their faith in the Lord, and these angels are to be our special help in every time of need. Every day we are to come to the Lord with full assurance of faith, and to look to Him for wisdom. . . . Those who are guided by the Word of the Lord will discern with certainty between falsehood and truth, between sin and righteousness. {AG 201.4}

The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is looking unto Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image. The pure element of love will expand the soul, giving it a capacity for higher attainments, for increased knowledge of heavenly things, so that it will not rest short of the fullness. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." {DA 302.1}

God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciple that the Christian becomes like Him in mind and character. Through a connection with Christ he will have clearer and broader views. His discernment will be more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. He who longs to be of service to Christ is so quickened by the life-giving power of the Sun of Righteousness that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God. {DA 251.1}

The Lord is our helper, our defense. God has provided that no soul that trusts in Him shall be overcome by the enemy. {CTr 47.4}

In the closing scenes of this earth's history, when intensity is taking possession of every earthly element, the Lord requires of us a vigilance that knows no relaxation. But we are not left to struggle alone. Amid the dangers increasing on every hand, those who walk humbly before

God, distrustful of their own wisdom, will have angels as their helpers and protectors. In times of special peril they will know the power of God's keeping care.—RH April 25, 1907. {TA 272.3}

He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, will carry forward His own work. He will thwart the purposes of wicked men, and will bring to confusion the counsels of those who plot mischief against His people. He who is the King, the Lord of hosts, sitteth between the cherubim, and amid the strife and tumult of nations He guards His children still. He who ruleth in the heavens is our Saviour. He measures every trial, He watches the furnace fire that must test every soul. When the strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of wrath shall strike through the hearts of His enemies, His people will be safe in His hands. {MB 121.1}

Satan is working with great diligence to compass the ruin of the souls of men. He has come down with great power, knowing that he has but a short time to work. Our only safety lies in following closely after Christ, walking in His wisdom, and practicing His truth. We cannot always readily detect the working of Satan; we do not know where he lays his traps. But Jesus understands the subtle arts of the enemy, and He can keep our feet in safe paths. . . . "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6) Christ declares. {OHC 16.3}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*
Lesson 4 "New Testament Prophets"

Read for this week's study

Matthew 16:13-16; Ephesians 2:20; Revelation 22:6; Luke 2:36-38; Acts 21:9; Ephesians 6:10-18.

Memory Text

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all" (1 Corinthians 12:4-6, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

I. Introduction
II. Jesus as Prophet
III. Apostles and Prophets
IV. Functions of New Testament Prophets
V. Female Prophets and Young Pastoral Associates
VI. False Prophets in the New Testament
VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration
Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. This week's lesson examines the gift of prophecy in the New Testament. Among the topics the lesson covers are how prophets functioned in the New Testament, the difference between apostles and prophets, and the danger of false prophets. (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. Read 1 Corinthians 12:28. Prophets are listed as one of many gifts alongside "apostle". What is the difference between the offices of apostle and prophet? (Sabbath Afternoon)
3. Was Jesus a prophet? How was this question answered in Jesus' day (Matthew 16:13-16)? (Sunday)

4. According to the Gospel of John (John 1:1-3; John 18-19), Jesus is both the Creator and the one who died on the cross. What is the relationship between these two roles of Jesus? (Sunday)

5. Read Ephesians 2:20 and 3:5. The New Testament mentions the work of both prophets and apostles. According to Luke 11:47-50, what do the two offices have in common? Does the passage in 2 Peter 3:1-2 distinguish between the two offices? What does Hebrews 3:1-2 add to this discussion? Read 1 Corinthians 12:28-31. What is the significance of the fact that numbers are attached to these offices? (Monday)

6. What are the functions of New Testament prophets (1 Cor 14:3; Eph 4:11-13; Rev 22:6)? (Tuesday)

7. What do Luke 2:36-38 and Acts 21:9 tell us about prophets? (Wednesday)

8. Read Matthew 24:23-24. What does Jesus warn about here? (Thursday)

9. According to Ephesians 6:10-17, how can we shield ourselves from any kind of deception? (Thursday)

10. According to the lesson, Ellen White's ministry had two primary functions; to lead people to Jesus and to point them to the Bible. Do you agree with that summary? What would you add to it or subtract from it? She saw her writings as a "lesser light" leading to the greater light of Scripture. If that is the case, why didn't she do more biblical exegesis? What is the relation of her gift to the canon of Scripture? (Friday)

11. When Ellen White says, "my work includes much more than the word 'prophet' signifies" (MS 63, 1906), does that make her more of an apostle for today? Or is the "prophet" role in the New Testament subordinate to the apostle as a successor of the Old Testament prophets? (Friday)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Did Jesus die the death of a sinner? Did God torture His Son to death? In the Garden of Gethsemane, nobody touched Him. He wished somebody would touch Him. He asked the three to come and be with Him, and they slept. Nobody was with Him. All by Himself, He was left to reap the natural results of being a sinner, as if He were. Now we know that He was not a sinner. He had appeared on the mount of transfiguration shortly before, hadn't He, in the unveiled glory of God. I used to wonder why that's in the story. If Jesus had been in any respect out of harmony with His Father, what would have happened to Him? When He had stood there in the unveiled glory of His Father? He would have been consumed. So the mount of transfiguration says, the One who went to Gethsemane and to Calvary was absolutely in harmony with His Father. There was no sin in Him at all. He didn't die because He was a sinner. He was perfect.

But He was made to be sin. In fact, Ellen White says nobody could make Him to be sin. He made Himself to be sin. He took it on Himself. And nobody could kill Him. He said, "Nobody takes my life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. So, in the Garden of Gethsemane, when He fell dying to the ground, the angels saw it. And they saw Gabriel speed down to strengthen Him. And had he not gone, He would have died. And that answers question number two. Yes, death is the result of sin, but it is not torture and execution at the hands of our gracious God. The Father's crying, and the Son is dying, and the Father is not hurting His Son. But He's sadly giving Him up, as if He were a sinner. And He's reaping the natural consequences of this being given up sadly, as if He were a sinner.

And the angels understand this. Now they'll never serve Him from fear. When they see the wicked die at the end of the millennium, they'll know God is not torturing His children to death. He's simply giving them up and handing them over to the inevitable consequences of being rebelliously out of harmony with God. And the glory of Him who is love will consume them because they've chosen to be out of harmony. And God is crying, "How can I give you up? How can I let you go? Why will you die?" {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Luke, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

http://pkp.cc/59MMPOGIA66 (Part 1) http://pkp.cc/60MMPOGIA66 (Part 2)

Now, is there a danger that we might leave too many of these very precious phrases and provisions just as phrases and say, "My Bible says without the shedding of blood there's no remission of sin and I don't know why. I know God knows why. I just want to know if He's satisfied because I want to be saved." Or is it right reverently to ask what does that really mean? Or is it possible that if we settle for the symbols without inquiring for the meaning, we would do exactly what many of the Jews did with the sacrificial system of the Old Testament? Did not that system become a great curse to them because they never asked for the meaning? And they never came to know God. They never thought that when they sacrificed a lamb it represented what we know it did.

Now what if we settle just for the highly symbolic language about the death of Christ and paying the price of sin and without the shedding of blood there's no remission of sin and covered with the righteousness of Christ. Those are interesting phrases, but the meaning is not that clear. Should we settle for the phrases, be grateful that God is satisfied, I want to know what I must do to be saved, believe in all this He says, "These are complications beyond your understanding, but we had some real problems up here. In order for you to be saved I want to tell you we've taken care of it." And I say, "Thank you, God, I believe it and I want to be saved."

Or do we miss, then, what God paid such a price to reveal? I think He wants us to ask. Hence Ellen White's wonderful, simple words in *Christ's Object Lessons*: "Merely to hear or to read the

word is not enough. He who desires to be profited by the Scriptures must [learn the meaning of the words of truth].” Now what’s the meaning? And can we be reverent when we ask the meaning? You used the phrase a while ago. Is there a way in which we could press for the meaning without seeming to be just academic about it? I mean this is life and death to us to find the meaning. What do these things mean? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Hebrews, #4, recorded October 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

http://pkp.cc/7MMHEBREWS66 (Part 1) http://pkp.cc/8MMHEBREWS66 (Part 2)

One view sees the plan of salvation and God’s gracious provisions, such as the death of Christ on the cross, as being primarily offered to adjust our legal standing in the sight of God. Because as sinners, we are guilty. And guilty as we are, justice and law demand that we be executed. And the only way to avoid being executed—and there are many, various explanations of execution; these are the various views of hell. We all have views of hell, the longer view, the medium view and the shorter view; there are many views of hell. But if God is the executioner, then we do well to be preoccupied with our legal standing. And unless we be forgiven, He will go ahead and do this to us; He must. Law and justice require it. And if He doesn’t go through with this, the universe will conclude He is unjust. And if He’s unjust, you wouldn’t trust Him, and now you’re getting over into the other view, which always amuses me, that if you pursue even the legal view logically to its conclusions you wind up with the other one.

But now in the larger view, which uses all sixty-six books and has no problems with Ellen White at all, it sees sin not as a legal problem. It sees sin as a very real problem that has had devastating consequences on us physically, mentally, spiritually, socially. Sin is a breach of trust, as Romans 14 says. Sin is treachery. Sin is what Lucifer did in the beginning, for which you could not have called him in before church counsel. I mean, what had he done? Nothing! Except the most devastating thing that can ever be done. Nearly destroyed the universe, that’s what he did.

That’s how bad it was. And because of this distrust, and the consequential unwillingness to listen and allow God to look after us and heal the damage done, enormous damage has been done to sinners**. We’re not in legal trouble, we’re in trouble. We’re not in danger of being executed, we’re dying. That’s the difference.** And I believe it makes all the difference in the world. I would not go to a doctor who would kill his patients for not cooperating. But if I’m dying, I need a doctor. And if I go and don’t cooperate, I still may die. But my understanding is, that in this larger view, this great controversy view, this sixty-six book view, we’re all dying. And if God were to leave us alone, that’s it.

But He hasn’t. He’s pursued us through the years, trying to win us back to trust. And of course, you don’t expect people to trust without evidence. You don’t make claims; you offer

demonstrations; that's the content of the sixty-six books, God's demonstration of the kind of person He is. And the way He's handled this emergency is the greatest demonstration of all. As to, not how He treats His friends, but how He treats His enemies. How He treats the sick and the dying; how does He seek to win them back to trust? And some of us find that very wonderful.

So the purpose of the plan of salvation is not to adjust our legal standing, but the purpose of the plan of salvation is to win us back to trust so He can heal us, which He can readily do, and it is to confirm the trust of the onlooking universe. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Questions People are Asking About the Plan of Salvation, recorded April 1983, Redlands, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:* http://pkp.cc/1MMQUESTP (Part 1) http://pkp.cc/2MMQUESTP (Part 2)

To some of us, the most important information we have to share with our fellow human beings around this planet is this truth about the way God runs His universe and what He wants of His children. We need to share this more urgently than ever before as we humans, all together, face the closing events of human history. Because before Christ returns, the Bible describes—in fact Jesus describes—a time of confusion and deception such as the world has never seen.

All of that will be leading up to Satan's final attempt to win the whole world to worship ***him***, to trust ***him***. He even asked Jesus to get down on His knees and worship him in the wilderness of temptation. Revelation 13 says that when Satan's campaign is over, the whole world ***will*** be worshiping him, except those few who have not been deceived. So it should not surprise us, if we are as near the End as we believe we are, that we find ourselves surrounded on all sides by conflicting claims to religious authority. Certainly the development of modern media has made us more aware of this than ever before. As we see and listen to all these conflicting claims, how often they are supported by position, or power, or miracles, or claims of special communications from the Lord.

How Satan would enjoy it if he could turn God's friends on this planet against their heavenly Father! Or even more seriously, how he would love to deceive God's friends even as they continue professing to be His commandment-keeping people. That would be the most destructive. No wonder Paul said that we should grow up and not be so easily swayed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. (Ephesians 4) Again in Hebrews 5 he says we should grow up and have our faculties trained by practice to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #7, "The Question of Authority" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/7MMCAG

Further Study with Ellen White

To human eyes Christ was only a man, yet He was a perfect man. In His humanity He was the impersonation of the divine character. God embodied His own attributes in His Son—His power, His wisdom, His goodness, His purity, His truthfulness, His spirituality, and His benevolence. In Him, though human, all perfection of character, all divine excellence, dwelt. And to the request of His disciple, "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us," He could reply, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" "I and my Father are one" (John 14:8, 9; 10:30). . . . {TMK 111.2}

But the work of human redemption is not all that is accomplished by the cross. The love of God is manifested to the universe. The prince of this world is cast out. The accusations which Satan has brought against God are refuted. The reproach which he has cast upon heaven is forever removed. Angels as well as men are drawn to the Redeemer. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," He said, "will draw all unto Me." {DA 626.1}

It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence. This work began in the heavenly courts. There God gave to human beings an unmistakable evidence of the love with which He regarded them. He "so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. The gift of Christ reveals the Father's heart. It testifies that, having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work. {9T 254.1}

Christ undertook to redeem man and to rescue the world from the grasp of Satan. The great controversy begun in heaven was to be decided in the very world, on the very same field, that Satan claimed as his. {PP 69.2}

The Sun of Righteousness did not burst upon the world in splendor, to dazzle the senses with His glory. It is written of Christ, "His going forth is prepared as the morning." Hosea 6:3. Quietly and gently the daylight breaks upon the earth, dispelling the shadow of darkness, and waking the world to life. So did the Sun of Righteousness arise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 261.3}

Jesus, the Majesty of heaven, proposes to elevate to companionship with Himself those who come to Him with their burdens, their weaknesses, and their cares. He will count them as His children, and finally give them an inheritance of more value than the empires of kings, a crown of glory richer than has ever decked the brow of the most exalted earthly monarch. {LHU 98.3}

All the heavenly intelligences were watching with intense interest the warfare that was going on upon the earth—the earth that Satan claimed as his dominion. Every moment was big with eternal realities. How would the conflict end? The angels looked for the justice of God to be

revealed, His anger to be aroused against the prince of darkness and his sympathizers. But lo, mercy prevailed. When the Son of God might have come to the world to condemn, He came as righteousness and peace, to save not merely the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but all the world—every son and daughter of Adam who would believe on Him, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. What an exhibition of the love of Jehovah! This is love without a parallel. {TMK 19.3}

What speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible Father. He is the manifestation of the Father, and is called the Word of God. God sent His Son into the world, His divinity clothed with humanity, that man might bear the image of the invisible God. He made known in His words, His character, His power and majesty, the nature and attributes of God. {TMK 38.4}

In the Bible the will of God is revealed. The truths of the Word of God are the utterances of the Most High. He who makes these truths a part of his life becomes in every sense a new creature. He is not given new mental powers, but the darkness that through ignorance and sin has clouded the understanding, is removed. The words, "A new heart also will I give you," mean, "A new mind will I give you." A change of heart is always attended by a clear conviction of Christian duty, an understanding of truth. He who gives the Scriptures close, prayerful attention will gain clear comprehension and sound judgment, as if in turning to God he had reached a higher plane of intelligence. {RH, December 18, 1913 par. 8}

The Lord's angels are appointed to keep strict watch over those who put their faith in the Lord, and these angels are to be our special help in every time of need. Every day we are to come to the Lord with full assurance of faith, and to look to Him for wisdom. . . . Those who are guided by the Word of the Lord will discern with certainty between falsehood and truth, between sin and righteousness. {Mar 192.6}

Satan is not permitted to counterfeit the manner of Christ's advent. The Saviour has warned His people against deception upon this point, and has clearly foretold the manner of His second coming. . . . This coming there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known—witnessed by the whole world. {GC 625.2}

Christ has made every provision for us to be strong. He has given us His Holy Spirit, whose office is to bring to our remembrance all the promises that Christ has made, that we may have peace and a sweet sense of forgiveness. If we will but keep our eyes fixed on the Saviour, and trust in His power, we shall be filled with a sense of security; for the righteousness of Christ will become our righteousness. . . . {AG 259.3}

If we have on the heavenly armor, we shall find that the assaults of the enemy will not have power over us. Angels of God will be round about us to protect us (RH May 25, 1905). {6BC 1119.4}

God has a deep and earnest love for every member of the human family; not one is forgotten, not one is left helpless and deceived to be overcome by the enemy. {FE 299.2}

Christ came to this earth in human form that He might stand as the Captain of our salvation, so that we should not be overcome by Satan's power. And when the enemy has seemed to be gaining a signal victory over righteousness, God has been working in mercy and power to counteract his designs. {TDG 308.4}

God has angels whose whole work is to draw those who shall be heirs of salvation. Whenever one takes a step toward Jesus, Jesus is taking steps toward him. The angels' work is to keep back the powers of Satan (MS 17, 1893). {7BC 922.5}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*
Lesson 5 "Revelation *and* Inspiration"

Read for this week's study

Hebrews 1:1, 2; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:18-21; Exodus 17:14; Revelation 1:19; Ezekiel 4:1-8.

Memory Text

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things he saw" (Revelation 1:1, 2, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

I. Introduction
II. General and Special Revelation
III. The Process of Inspiration
IV. Oral Messages
V. Written Messages
VI. Drama, Symbols, Parables
VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration
Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. This week's lesson focuses on the revelation/inspiration process, with special attention to the oral, written, and dramatized ways the divine message has been communicated to human beings. (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. Read Revelation 1:1-3. The lesson author sees this passage as a "classic example of the revelation-inspiration process". What is going on in this passage?
3. Read Hebrews 1:1-2. What does the string of adverbs in this passage tell us about God? Do an internet search on the concepts of "general" and "special" revelation. What is the difference between these two and why does it matter? (Sunday)

4. Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17. What are these verses saying that impacts our view of inspiration? What are we saying when we call the Bible the Word of God?

5. Read 2 Peter 1:20-21. What assurance do we have that the oral messages delivered by God's prophets were as inspired and reliable as the written ones? Which kind of communication is more effective, oral or written? (Tuesday)

6. If an inspired writer or Jesus Himself was the author of a text, would it still be possible to misunderstand? (Tuesday)

7. What is the difference between a canonical and a non-canonical prophet? (Tuesday)

8. Seventh-day Adventists believe Ellen White possessed the same quality of inspiration as Bible prophets, though she never considered her writings to be equal in authority with Scripture. On the contrary, Ellen G. White always uplifted the Bible. But how did she herself understand God's prophetic revelations to her and the process of her inspiration?

   First, Ellen G. White always considered the Bible as the authoritative and infallible revelation of God.

   Second, Ellen G. White recognized that the process of inspiration involved divine-human interaction. God communicated His messages, but then the prophet would convey the divine instruction using his or her own words. As Ellen G. White put it: "It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. . . . The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God"—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 21.

   Third, Ellen G. White noted that not all her human experiences and communications were inspired. "There are times when common things must be stated," she advised, "common thoughts must occupy the mind, common letters must be written and information given that has passed from one to another of the workers. Such words, such information, are not given under the special inspiration of the Spirit of God."—*Selected Messages,* book 1, p. 39. It is important to realize this distinction as we read and relate to her writings and experiences, particularly her correspondence and diaries.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now, a great key text, of course, is 2 Timothy 3:16. Is there any better known one, in the pastorals, than this one on the inspiration of Scripture? This is going to vary in the versions. First, I'll use the *Revised Standard*, which is in the *King James* tradition:

> All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Now, that way of translating it has been a temptation to people to use this verse as proof that the Bible is inspired. You have a question, how do we know that the Bible is inspired? Answer, 2 Timothy 3:16. Next question, how much of the Bible is inspired? Answer, 2 Timothy 3:16. Well, I should have brought along my Mormon Bible. It has the same verse in it. Or I should have brought along the Bible that contains the Apocrypha; the same verse is in it. So we can't use that verse. Do you remember in the very beginning of the year, I brought the *New Testament Revised by the Spirits*? That's a dreadful publication, in 1861, and it claims to be inspired. There's the *Inspired Version*. Joseph Smith took the *King James Version*, and he edited it all the way through, and introduced many ideas. And he says that this was revised under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Anybody could write a paper and claim that it's inspired. It might sell better.

Imagine if a student in class wrote a term paper and then said, "Everything in this term paper is inspired." How could you give him an "F"? But those claims are not worth anything, are they? Do you remember the older prophet who said, "I am a prophet of the Lord, and the angel of the Lord has told me thus and so . . . but he lied to him." Of claims, we are warned all through the Bible not to accept mere claims. I think it's a great mistake to use this verse to prove the inspiration of Scripture. Now, if you want to use it that way, beware of how our Roman Catholic friends use it. Do you know, this is their key text for the inspiration of the Apocrypha. You say, "You can't do that. That is the one we use for our sixty-six books." They say, "Oh yes we can."

Timothy's grandmother was a Jewess. He learned the scriptures. Did he learn them in Hebrew or in Greek? He would learn them in Greek. And so he would use the Greek Bible. This is the argument, if you were to sign up for the Knights of Columbus Radio Bible Correspondence Course, and they sent you the little book of doctrines, Father Smith Instructs Jackson, or is it Father Jackson Instructs Smith? It's one or the other. And in there there's a section on this. And it argues that when Paul said to Timothy, "All Scripture is inspired of God," Timothy would say, "Ah, that's my Bible that Paul is referring to." And Timothy's Bible was the Greek Bible, and it contained the Apocrypha. And so this is the Roman Catholic key text for the inspiration of the Apocrypha. So maybe we'd better not use it. Besides, it has no authority anyway, does it? How can you just put a verse in, and say that makes it inspired?

Then what was Paul's intention? Do you have a version that translates it some other way? Yes, do you have *New English*? It's going to read another way in there, isn't it?

COMMENT: "Every inspired scripture has its use for teaching the truth and refuting error, or for reformation of manners and discipline in right living, so that the man who belongs to God may be efficient and equipped for good work of every kind."

Now, you notice there, in the *New English Bible*, this verse is not a statement of the inspiration of Scripture. It's a statement of the value of inspired writing. Now you could make that statement. And you see, if Timothy was aware of these other books that claim to be inspired, he needed this advice. And Paul is saying, "Timothy, there are lots of books claiming to be inspired, but only that writing," and that's what Scripture means, 'writing' "only that writing which is inspired of God is profitable," not these others. So this is the best protection against the Apocrypha, rather than proving the Apocrypha is inspired. Now, did Ellen White ever use the verse? In the Introduction to *The Great Controversy*, page 6, or is it 7, she uses it precisely right. And to do it, she uses the *Revised Version*, "That scripture which is inspired of God is profitable." It is not a verse that proves the inspiration of Scripture. It's a verse that states the profitability of inspired writing. What do you think? Yes?

COMMENT: That still seems to leave you back where you started, because how are you to decide what came from God and what didn't?

Oh, then you have that to do next. How do you determine the Scriptures which were inspired of God? But at least the verse has value then. With all the other things going around, Paul says, "Beware. Be cautious. That scripture which is inspired by God is profitable." And he doesn't take up the subject of how you decide which is and which is not.

COMMENT: But doesn't that statement seem self-evident?

How do you mean?

COMMENT: Wouldn't people figure that what God said, or what came from God, was obviously profitable, and what didn't, you could reject.

Well, I think, apart from the setting of there being all these other books, there wouldn't be the need for the statement. When you look at all the apocryphal and the pseudepigraphical books, which many accepted, and there are key texts used to this day, as you know, from Maccabees and Ecclesiasticus and so on; one needs this counsel. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – 1&2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

http://pkp.cc/71MMPOGIA66 (Part 1) http://pkp.cc/72MMPOGIA66 (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

Satanic agencies are always warring for the mastery over the human mind, but the angels of God are constantly at work, strengthening the weak hands and confirming the feeble knees of all who call upon God for help (RH July 4, 1899). {7BC 923.5}

Taking humanity upon Him, Christ came to be one with humanity, and at the same time to reveal our heavenly Father to sinful human beings. He who had been in the presence of the Father from the beginning, He who was the express image of the invisible God, was alone able to reveal the character of the Deity to mankind. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of men; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was a stranger and sojourner on the earth—in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin. Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {MH 422.2}

Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. {FLB 142.2}

The Spirit of Christ, working upon the heart conforms it to His image; for Christ is the model upon which the Spirit works. By the ministry of His Word, by His providences, by His inward working, God stamps the likeness of Christ upon the soul. {TDG 46.5}

Through the gospel, souls that are degraded and enslaved by Satan are to be redeemed to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. God's purpose is not merely to deliver from the suffering that is the inevitable result of sin, but to save from sin itself. . . . Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God's image, may attain. {MB 60.3}

In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power. {MH 415.1}

The evidence of the truth of God's word is in the word itself. Scripture is the key that unlocks scripture. The deep meaning of the truths of God's word is unfolded to our minds by His Spirit. {8T 157.1}

God wants our minds to expand. He desires to put His grace upon us. We may have a feast of good things every day, for God can open the whole treasure of heaven to us. {Mar 23.3}

The Scriptures were given to men, not in a continuous chain of unbroken utterances, but piece by piece through successive generations, as God in His providence saw a fitting opportunity to impress man at sundry times and divers places. Men wrote as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. There is "first the bud, then the blossom, and next the fruit," "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." This is exactly what the Bible utterances are to us. {7BC 945.5}

The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes. {7BC 945.7}

The Creator of all ideas may impress different minds with the same thought, but each may express it in a different way, yet without contradiction. The fact that this difference exists should not perplex or confuse us. It is seldom that two persons will view and express truth in the very same way. Each dwells on particular points which his constitution and education have fitted him to appreciate. The sunlight falling upon the different objects gives those objects a different hue. {1SM 22.1}

The Bible is its own expositor. One passage will prove to be a key that will unlock other passages, and in this way light will be shed upon the hidden meaning of the word. By comparing different texts treating on the same subject, viewing their bearing on every side, the true meaning of the Scriptures will be made evident. {FE 187.2}

The Bible contains a simple and complete system of theology and philosophy. It is the book that makes us wise unto salvation. It tells us how to reach the abodes of eternal happiness. It tells us of the love of God as shown in the plan of redemption, imparting the knowledge essential for all—the knowledge of Christ. He is the Sent of God; He is the Author of our salvation. But apart from the Word of God, we could have no knowledge that such a person as the Lord Jesus ever visited our world, nor any knowledge of His divinity, as indicated by His previous existence with the Father. {LHU 130.5}

In the truths of His word, God has given to men a revelation of Himself; and to all who accept them they are a shield against the deceptions of Satan. {GC 465.1}

The word of God, like the character of its Author, presents mysteries that can never be fully comprehended by finite beings. But God has given in the Scriptures sufficient evidence of their divine authority. His own existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. True, He has not removed the possibility of doubt; faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration; those who

wish to doubt have opportunity; but those who desire to know the truth find ample ground for faith. {Ed 169.2}

After His resurrection Jesus appeared to His disciples on the way to Emmaus, and, “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Luke 24:27. The hearts of the disciples were stirred. Faith was kindled. They were “begotten again into a lively hope” even before Jesus revealed Himself to them. It was His purpose to enlighten their understanding and to fasten their faith upon the “sure word of prophecy.” He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, not merely because it was supported by His personal testimony, but because of the unquestionable evidence presented by the symbols and shadows of the typical law, and by the prophecies of the Old Testament. It was needful for the followers of Christ to have an intelligent faith, not only in their own behalf, but that they might carry the knowledge of Christ to the world. {GC 349.1}

This Holy Book has withstood the assaults of Satan, who has united with evil men to make everything of divine character shrouded in clouds and darkness. But the Lord has preserved this Holy Book by His own miraculous power in its present shape—a chart or guidebook to the human family to show them the way to heaven. {1SM 15.3}

Each law of God is an enactment of mercy, love, and saving power. These laws, obeyed, are our life, our salvation, our happiness, our peace [Psalm 119:165 quoted] (Letter 112, 1902). {3BC 1153.6}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*
Lesson 6 "The Prophetic Writings"

Read for this week's study

Exodus 17:14**;** Isaiah 13:1; Jeremiah 36:17, 18; Romans 16:22; Luke 1:1-4; Jude 14, 15; 2 Corinthians 4:7.

Memory Text

"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

I. Introduction
II. The Call to Write
III. Literary Genres and Styles
IV. Literary Assistants
V. Literary Sources
VI. Divine Message and Human Imperfections
VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration
Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The Bible describes three major ways that prophets communicated God's messages: 1) orally, 2) through writing, and 3) through symbolic actions and dramatizations. This week's lesson focuses on the writings of the prophets, their use of literary assistants, and how to deal with passages that are difficult to understand. According to Romans 15:4, what is the purpose of inspired writings? (Sabbath Afternoon).

2. Prior to the time of Moses, God used direct oral communication with audible voices or in dreams, or through angels. What was the very first mention of writing in the Bible (Exod 17:14)? According to Jeremiah 36:2-3, what was God's purpose in asking Jeremiah to write? What would you say to someone who thinks we can't trust the Bible because we don't have the original manuscripts? (Sunday)

3. The Bible contains a wide variety of writing styles; poetry, narrative, court records, letters (to individuals or communities), diaries (Numbers 33), prophetic oracles,

apocalyptic, prayers, covenant lawsuits, and songs. Read Isaiah 17:7. What kind of poetry is that? What does the use of poetry tell you about God? There is also in the Bible the use of devices like metaphor (Psalm 23:1; John 6:35) and hyperbole (John 21:25; Matt 19:24). What do these tell you about God? (Monday)

4. Did prophets immediately write down what God shared with them, or did they sometimes get help in expressing the thoughts that they received from God? Read Jeremiah 36:17-18; Romans 16:22. (Tuesday)

5. The Bible also exhibits evidence that its authors used literary sources. See Ecclesiastes 12:9-10, Proverbs 31:1, 1 Kings 11:41, Luke 1:1-4, Acts 17:26-28, and Jude 14-15. (Wednesday)

6. What does Paul mean when he writes that the knowledge of God is like a treasure hidden in "clay pots" (2 Cor 4:7)? Which is your favorite biblical example of an inspired writer who demonstrated major character flaws? Why did God choose to use fallible human beings rather than sinless angels as agents of His revelation? (Thursday)

7. When we look at the phenomena of inspiration as seen in the Bible, Ellen White's experiences and even shortcomings seem quite similar to the experiences and shortcomings of the biblical prophets. Many of the criticisms directed at her would for similar reasons be directed at the biblical prophets if they were alive today. (Friday)

8. Like Paul, Ellen White employed literary assistants. They were not ghostwriters or co-authors. But the great volume of work she produced would not have been possible without them. She was an avid reader, but she was not a trained researcher. With the help of these assistants, she quoted and adapted material from many historical and spiritual sources, including "Biographies of Christ" that were sometimes quite creative with the biblical material. She recommended to her readers many of the books she had utilized herself, so there seems no intent to deceive. Be that as it may, "In regard to infallibility, I never claimed it" (1 *Selected Messages*, 37). She also grew and matured in her skills as a writer and in her understanding of theological themes, especially regarding the character of God. Many of those who knew her the best were convinced that she was a modern-day, non-canonical prophet of God. (Friday)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now as you know, all the original copies of the Bible have disappeared. There are hundreds and thousands of hand-written copies though that have come down to us through the years and no two of them are the same, which could distress a person who doesn't know better. But if you have had a chance to see these manuscripts, hundreds and thousands of them, and note what the differences are like, you would be moved rather to say that no other ancient document has

been preserved with such care and accuracy as the books of the Bible. That's why I put that comment at the bottom of the sheet by the noted scholar who spent a lifetime studying such matters, who said, "You can pick the Bible up with confidence and say, for all practical purposes, we have the word of God."

But what about all the translations? There are about two thousand languages on earth and there are Bibles, at least parts of the Bible, in almost every one of those languages. And hundreds of translations in English! For a little while I contemplated bringing mine from home and displaying them here—until I measured them and found I would need a table twenty-eight feet long. And I only have a few. I have about 150 and there are many more than that. Fear of versions is lessening now. No one is prepared to burn the *Revised Standard* version, as someone did when it first appeared, in Akron, Ohio. The address of that public burning was appropriately Furnace Street, Akron, Ohio. I have a photograph of it in a newspaper. The right attitude towards versions, I think, is in our *King James* preface. I wish it were still there. You see nobody wanted the *King James* when it first came out. It wasn't just the size, the words were changed and the men who prepared this great Bible say in the introduction: "Hath the Kingdom of God become words and syllables? Why should we be in bondage to them when we may be free?"

You see, as Hebrews says, "in many and various ways" God has spoken to us through the years. And in many and various ways those words have been translated into English and most of the other languages on this earth. How else could the gospel go to all the world? How could people find out about our God? And so my recommendation would be to take the Bible (or preferably the versions, plural, of your choice) and let's sit down together, and take up the fourth question, next week. Having these magnificent opportunities—never has the Bible been so readily available. And having all this evidence so readily available, let's read it. Can we confidently come to the conclusion that we understand the meaning? That the evidence is really there, the Bible can be trusted? And, as some of us who have spent a lot of time reading these versions believe, the Author who is behind the Bible can be trusted because there is trustworthy evidence in the record. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #5, "The Record of the Evidence" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/5MMCAG

Right now, the General Conference has employed an individual or two to carefully research the writings of Ellen White, the sources that she used, and so forth. That is pure, unadulterated higher criticism. That's what it's all about. So it's a very interesting thing. As a church we have tended to condemn higher criticism, and we are paying somebody to conduct higher criticism of Ellen White.

To be consistent, we should do higher criticism on the Bible. Why not? When we talked about Peter and Mark writing the gospel, that's higher criticism, you see. There's nothing wrong with higher criticism. It's like viewing the source of a document, like a river. The closer you get to the source of the river, the higher it is. So when you are asking, "Where did this book come from? Who wrote it? When? To whom? Under what circumstances? Where did the ideas come from?" That's higher criticism. When you get lower down, all you are concerned about is, "Do we have the right words?" That's otherwise known as textual criticism. When we consider whether these words were in the manuscript or not, that's lower criticism, or textual criticism. There's nothing arrogant about "higher". It isn't called higher because it assumes a certain arrogance on the part of the critics. It's that you're coming a little closer to the sources. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Mark, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

http://pkp.cc/53MMPOGIA66 (Part 1) http://pkp.cc/54MMPOGIA66 (Part 2)

Recommended Further Study:

Conversations About God #5 "The Record of the Evidence" is available at:
http://pkp.cc/5MMCAG

Further Study with Ellen White

The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers. {7BC 945.9}

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the Word of God (MS 24, 1886). {7BC 945.10}

The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes. {YRP 225.2}

The stamps of minds are different. All do not understand expressions and statements alike. Some understand the statements of the Scriptures to suit their own particular minds and cases.

Prepossessions, prejudices, and passions have a strong influence to darken the understanding and confuse the mind even in reading the words of Holy Writ. . . . {YRP 225.3}

“The Bible points to God as its Author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all ‘given by inspiration of God’ (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by his Holy Spirit had shed light into the minds and hearts of his servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed, have themselves embodied the thought in human language.
{RH, August 30, 1906 par. 5}

“The ten commandments were spoken by God himself, and were written by his own hand. They are of divine, and not of human, composition. But the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, represents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that `the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.’ John 1:14.
{RH, August 30, 1906 par. 6}

“Written in different ages, by men who differed widely in rank and occupation and in mental and spiritual endowments, the books of the Bible present a wide contrast in style, as well as a diversity in the nature of the subjects unfolded. Different forms of expression are employed by different writers; often the same truth is more strikingly presented by one than by another. And as several writers present a subject under varied aspects and relations, there may appear, to the superficial, careless, or prejudiced reader, to be discrepancy or contradiction, where the thoughtful, reverent student, with clearer insight, discerns the underlying harmony.
{RH, August 30, 1906 par. 7}

“As presented through different individuals, the truth is brought out in its varied aspects. One writer is more strongly impressed with one phase of a subject; he grasps those points that harmonize with his experience or with his power of perception and appreciation; another seizes upon a different phase and each, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, presents what is most forcibly impressed upon his own mind; a different aspect of the truth in each, but a perfect harmony through all. And the truths thus revealed unite to form a perfect whole, adapted to meet the wants of men in all the circumstances and experiences of life. {RH, August 30, 1906 par. 8}

“God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do His work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, none the less, from Heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect

expression of human language, yet it is the testimony of God; and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth." {1SM 26.1}

He who called the fisherman of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Christ. He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that, uniting with Christ, we may work the works of God. {DA 297.1}

All heaven is interested in the work going on in this world, which is to prepare men and women for the future, immortal life. It is God's plan that human agencies shall have the high honor of acting as co-workers with Jesus Christ in the salvation of souls. {5T 573.3}

God is not dependent upon men for the advancement of His cause. He might have made angels the ambassadors of His truth. He might have made known His will, as He proclaimed the law from Sinai with His own voice. But in order to cultivate a spirit of benevolence in us, He has chosen to employ men to do this work. {CS 20.1}

God might have committed the message of the gospel, and all the work of loving ministry, to the heavenly angels. He might have employed other means for accomplishing His purpose. But in His infinite love He chose to make us co-workers with Himself, with Christ and the angels, that we might share the blessing, the joy, the spiritual uplifting, which results from this unselfish ministry. {SC 79.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*
Lesson 7 "Now Hear This!"

Read for this week's study

Numbers 13:26-30; Jeremiah 36:20-26; 2 Chronicles 36:15, 16; Matthew 23:30-35**;**
1 Corinthians 10:6-12.

Memory Text

"Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Corinthians 10:11, NASB).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

I. Introduction
II. Anger at God's Messenger
III. Destroying the Message: Part 1
IV. Destroying the Message: Part 2
V. Hypocrisy
VI. For Our Admonition
VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration
Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. It has never been easy to be a prophet of God. Biblical prophets were often called to deliver messages that people did not want to hear. Conflict in the wake of a prophetic message was almost guaranteed. The truth about God almost always goes contrary to people's experiences, ideas, felt needs, and convictions. When that happens, some people submit to the truth and turn away from their delusions. Others rebel against these revelations of God and become more and more hardened in opposition, sometimes to the point of abuse and murder. The theme of this lesson is how and why prophets have faced so much human opposition. (Sabbath Afternoon)

2. The Bible indicates that every person in this world has received a measure of faith and of understanding from God (Rom 12:3; John 1:9). Everyone also lives in the world and is influenced by it (Rom 12:2). How can we best manage that inner

conflict in our own lives? What does John 3:18-21 tell us about that dynamic? (Sabbath Afternoon)

3. Read Numbers 13:25 through 14:24. Why are these people so upset with Aaron and Moses? How much easier is it to trust God when things are going well versus when disaster strikes? (Sunday)

4. Read Jeremiah 36:16-26. What was going on in the court and how did the leaders respond to the prophetic warning? Read Jeremiah 36:27-31. How did God respond to Jehoiakim's act of defiance? (Monday)

5. Read 2 Chronicles 36:15-16. This is a historical summary of the events also narrated in Jeremiah. How did the nation of Judah respond to the messages sent to them by God through the prophets? What was the final result of these actions? (Tuesday)

6. Read Matthew 23:29-35. What important but painful point is Jesus making here? How is Revelation 3:17 related to this? (Wednesday)

7. Read 1 Corinthians 10:6-12. According to Paul, why did God inspire the prophets to write what they wrote in the Bible? What is the relationship between Israel and the church (Gal 6:16)? How does Paul's approach to the purpose of the Bible compare with John's (John 20:30-31)? (Thursday)

8. In the lesson it says, "God does not waste words. When He speaks, His Words are eternal." How do you understand this statement, do you agree or disagree? (Thursday)

9. According to this lesson, Ellen White is like the biblical prophets in two important ways: 1) Like the biblical prophets, she experienced supernatural phenomena while in vision, and 2) she experienced much rejection of her ministry, both from those who ignored it, and from those who in practice exalted her gift over the Bible. Regarding the former, she had this to say: "God has set me as a reprover of His people; and . . . as He has laid upon me the heavy burden, He will make those to whom this message is given responsible for the manner in which they treat it. . . . I have not chosen this unpleasant labor for myself." 4T 231-232. (Friday)

10. What impact have the prophetic writings of the Bible made in your life? What about the writings of Ellen G. White? In what ways have understanding both been a challenge in your life? (Thursday)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

COMMENT: Hypocrites are especially disliked by everybody, and maybe God doesn't like them, either.

Why do you suppose? Why?

COMMENT: They're dishonest.

Why doesn't He like dishonest people? Do they offend Him? Or is it that He can't work with them?

COMMENT: He can't work with pride.

Well, when you think of salvation as healing, and God wishes to heal everyone. He says, "Why will you die? I have the power to heal every one of you. But you keep cheating. Every time you come back to My office, and I ask you, 'Have you taken your medicine? Have you followed the program?'"

"Oh yes, doctor. Oh yes doctor."

"I was looking out the window last week and I saw you flip the medicine over the wall, and you stand here and say, 'Yes.' If you go on cheating like this you're going to die. It isn't that I hate you, patient of Mine, you happen to be My son, and I don't want you to die. But if you go on doing this, I'll have to give you up to the consequences, and you're going to die, and I don't want you to die." Isn't that why He says cursed be the cheat? You can't save a cheat. You can't heal a cheat. But there's never anything arbitrary. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Acts, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

http://pkp.cc/59MMPOGIA66 (Part 1) http://pkp.cc/60MMPOGIA66 (Part 2)

Now, what is the essence of sin, in scripture? Let's take the Romans definition. We so customarily use 1 John 3:4. But the last verse of Romans 14 says, "Sin is a breech of trust." Whatever is not of faith is sin. It's faithlessness. And the woman was an unfaithful woman. That's the whole thing. We may be very ignorant, but if we trust God enough to be willing to listen, He can heal all the damage done. But where there is not honesty, integrity, humility, a willingness to listen, then God can do nothing if we go on again and again playing Him false. These next few books will emphasize this so frequently. Of course Isaiah did, Jeremiah did.

That's the hypocrite. The hypocrite is playing false. I think we've discussed the word 'hypocrite' haven't we, that Jesus used so often? It's made up of two parts, "*hupo*" meaning 'under', 'hypoglycemia'; your blood sugar is down. 'Hypo' is under. And then "*krites"* means a mask. An

actor was, in those days, a hypocrite. See, Rock Hudson is a very successful hypocrite! But it has a different meaning now. It doesn't mean he's playing false. It means he's a good actor. And it came to have this regrettable connotation later on. A saint who is only wearing the mask of sainthood, you see, a pious fraud, is the one the Lord cannot help at all. Ellen White has that colorful comment that to the Lord, pretentious piety is nauseating. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Hosea, Joel, Amos, recorded March 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

http://pkp.cc/41MMPOGIA66 (Hosea Part 1) http://pkp.cc/43MMPOGIA66 (Joel & Amos Pt 1)
http://pkp.cc/42MMPOGIA66 (Hosea Part 2) http://pkp.cc/44MMPOGIA66 (Joel & Amos Pt 2)

And I'm impressed; I've never worked out the percentage, but the overwhelming proportion of scripture is in terms of pictures and stories and demonstrations and examples rather than in statements. Here and there the statements are sprinkled through, like little sub-headings. And we pluck out the sub-headings and then argue over the words, to our loss, I believe. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Hebrews, recorded July 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

http://pkp.cc/73MMPOGIA66 (Part 1) http://pkp.cc/74MMPOGIA66 (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

With the trusting faith of a little child, we are to come to our heavenly Father, telling Him of all our needs. He is always ready to pardon and help. The supply of divine wisdom is inexhaustible, and the Lord encourages us to draw largely from it. {3BC 1146.8}

God is ever seeking to instruct finite men that they may exercise faith in Him and trust themselves wholly in His hands. Every drop of rain or flake of snow, every spire of grass, every leaf and flower and shrub, testifies of God. These little things so common around us, teach the lesson that nothing is beneath the notice of the infinite God, nothing too small for His attention (GCB Feb. 18, 1897). {3BC 1141.3}

But though the conflict is a ceaseless one, none are left to struggle alone. Angels help and protect those who walk humbly before God. Never will our Lord betray one who trusts in Him. As His children draw near to Him for protection from evil, in pity and love He lifts up for them a

standard against the enemy. Touch them not, He says; for they are Mine. I have graven them upon the palms of My hands. {PK 570.4}

We are to rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. The answer to our prayers may not come as quickly as we desire, and it may not be just what we have asked; but He who knows what is for the highest good of His children will bestow a much greater good than we have asked, if we do not become faithless and discouraged. {SD 92.2}

The Christian always has a strong helper in the Lord. The way of the Lord's helping we may not know; but this we do know: He will never fail those who put their trust in Him. {PK 576.1}

The Lord will not disappoint any who put their trust in Him. He will be first and last and best in everything to us. He will be a present help in every time of need. In these last days of service we shall ... be held, and led, and protected, by the power of Christ. {RY 112.1}

It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. {SC 17.2}

God destroys no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself. Everyone who stifles the admonitions of conscience is sowing the seeds of unbelief, and these will produce a sure harvest. By rejecting the first warning from God, Pharaoh of old sowed the seeds of obstinacy, and he reaped obstinacy. God did not compel him to disbelieve. The seed of unbelief which he sowed produced a harvest of its kind. Thus his resistance continued, until he looked upon his devastated land, upon the cold, dead form of his first-born, and the first-born of all in his house and of all the families in his kingdom, until the waters of the sea closed over his horses and his chariots and his men of war. His history is a fearful illustration of the truth of the words that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7. Did men but realize this, they would be careful what seed they sow. {COL 84.4}

No soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. "Man turns from God, not God from him." Our heavenly Father follows us with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain. The responsibility rests with the sinner. By resisting the Spirit of God today, he prepares the way for a second resistance of light when it comes with mightier power. Thus he passes on from one stage of resistance to another, until at last the light will fail to impress, and he will cease to respond in any measure to the Spirit of God. Then even "the light that is in thee" has become darkness. The very truth we do know has become so perverted as to increase the blindness of the soul. {MB 93.1}

The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God. {GC 542.2}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {FLB 84.7}

God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. {GC 36.1}

We want all to understand how the soul is destroyed. It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved. He does not throw a darkness before the eyes which cannot be penetrated. But man at first resists a motion of the Spirit of God, and, having once resisted, it is less difficult to do so the second time, less the third, and far less the fourth. {5T 120.2}

And the same compassion that reached out to rescue Peter is extended to every soul who has fallen under temptation. It is Satan's special device to lead man into sin, and then leave him, helpless and trembling, fearing to seek for pardon. But why should we fear, when God has said, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me?" Isaiah 27:5. Every provision has been made for our infirmities, every encouragement offered us to come to Christ. {COL 156.1}

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us. {DA 668.3}

Prayer is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; and the promise is, "Ye shall receive." {AA 564.1}

In calling them to His service, God offers them freedom. Obedience to God is liberty from the thralldom of sin, deliverance from human passion and impulse. {TM 247.1}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. "Come now, and let us reason together" is the Creator's invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18.

God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

Satan is constantly urging men to accept his principles. Thus he seeks to counterwork the work of God. He is constantly representing the chosen people of God as a deluded people. He is an accuser of the brethren, and his accusing power he is constantly using against those who work righteousness. The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan's charges by showing the result of obedience to right principles. {6T 11.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*
Lesson 8 "Interpreting Prophetic Writings"

Read for this week's study

Matthew 5:17-48; 1 Corinthians 16:20; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 10:25-28; Luke 24:25-27, 44-49.

Memory Text

"Then beginning with Moses and with all the Prophets, He explained to them the things written about Himself in all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27, NASB).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

I. Introduction
II. The Bible, Its Own Interpreter
III. The Historical-Cultural Context
IV. The Literary Context
V. The Meaning of the Text
VI. Biblical Exposition
VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration
Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. "Christ solved the misunderstanding of these two disciples by explaining the Scriptures to them from a broader perspective (Luke 24:25-27). […] These experiences highlight the positive results of correctly understanding prophetic writings. A false understanding of prophecy can lead to spiritual disaster." (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What is Jesus doing with the two disciples in Luke 24? His frustration with them is not that they *believed* what the prophets had said about Jesus and now his death stopped *that* plan from proceeding smoothly. His frustration is that they *have not* believed what the prophets had said about Jesus! His frustration with them is that they interpreted the prophets through the majority interpretation of the day and did not rise above it in spite of the time spent with Jesus during his earthly ministry.
3. For these disciples, Jesus' death is the end of hope. But for Jesus, his death is not the end of hope; it is actually the beginning of hope. For Jesus, everything about the cross and the crucifixion and his death can be explained from the Hebrew Scriptures. What did Jesus achieve with his interpretation? What was the main purpose of it?
4. What did Jesus do with the teachings of the Old Testament in Matthew 5:17-48? (Sunday's lesson) *Abolishing* and *fulfilling* were common ways of speaking about the Torah in Jesus' day. When people were discussing the Bible and trying to figure out

what it looked like to live by its principles, if someone suggested a misguided interpretation, they would be told, "You have abolished the Torah!" And if there was an agreement that this is what it looked like to live by the Torah, people would say, "You have fulfilled the Torah!"

5. How is Jesus moving from *interpretation* to *incarnation*? What can we learn from his attitude towards violence (Jesus never quotes Judges!), divisions among major people groups (Samaritans, women, lepers), clean and unclean, or people who are going to be judged harshly by God? Why do people take him outside of the village and try to kill him? (Luke 4:16-30)

6. Why is considering the historical-cultural context (Monday's lesson) and literary context (Tuesday's lesson) and the meaning of the text (Wednesday's lesson) important? (Isaiah 65:20; 1 Corinthians 16:20; Psalm 91:11-12; Matthew 5:48 cf. Luke 6:36)

7. What is the goal of biblical exposition? (Thursday's lesson) What does it mean when Jesus tells his disciples that they will be binding and loosing (Matthew 16:19; 18:18)? *Binding* and *loosing* was a first-century way of talking about interpretation. How is this an *invitation* from Jesus to put flesh and blood on the Bible in their time, place and culture (Acts 8:26-40; 10:1-48)

8. Howe does this apply to the writings of Ellen G. White? (Friday's lesson)

9. In two to three hours (7 miles/11 km), and using nothing but the Hebrew Scriptures, Jesus was able to convert his disciples' despair to hope and give them a vision of a new future. In Jesus' day, some people could read, study, and discuss the Scriptures their entire lives and still miss its central message. In Jesus' day, other people could follow him, learn from him, drop everything to be his disciples, and yet find themselves returning home, thinking Jesus had failed.

10. Life's disruptions can often be the catalysts for our growth. But just like the two disciples on the Emmaus road or Peter in Joppa, our travel, meeting people from other 'tribes', reading new things, hearing new perspectives, seeing data or research we have not seen before, we may discover that our previous ways of categorizing and labeling and believing are not adequate. We have a choice: either we ignore or deny or minimize our experience, or we open ourselves up to the very real pain of leaving that old way of understanding behind.

11. It is possible to resist the very growth and change and expanding consciousness that God desires for us to have by appealing to our religious convictions (10:14-15). But God wants us to experience new freedom, new inclusion, a new level complexity. This can be exciting and liberating, but it can also have a traumatic dimension to it. But once you have seen, you cannot unsee. That's the ultimate purpose of interpretation.

12. If you have been handed a way of seeing the world and reading the Bible (and EGW!) that does not work for you anymore and yet that previous way of understanding still has a strange power over you, do not deny the disruptions. They are expansions. That's how God wants you to grow. That's how "the eyes of your heart will be enlightened"

(Ephesians 1:18). And then you can pass it on and help someone else to see the unseen.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

That brings up the fundamental principle of interpretation, which we must use throughout the rest of our conversation, the principle of context. It was the context, it was the setting, that determined the meaning of a passage when it was originally written. To the extent that we can recreate and recover that original setting we are in a position to recover the original meaning.

When Paul says, "I wish you could be as I am. It's all right to marry if you must, but I wish you could be as I am," does that mean that all of us are second class saints if we're married? No, put it in its context. Why did he say, "I would not allow a woman to speak in church?" And why does the Old Testament say, "You cannot boil a kid in its mother's milk"? And then you turn to Judges. That is a stirring time every trip through the Bible. And you read about Samson, filled with the Spirit, killing a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass. You read about that fat king and the dagger that was thrust into him. And the dreadful story of the Levite and his concubine.

I brought with me the worst illustration I have ever seen of reading the Bible the wrong way. It is called *The Bible Unmasked*. A man whose avowed purpose was to destroy confidence in the Bible and in God, collected every unpleasant story of immorality and cruelty in the Bible and laid them end to end with the preface, "Would you mothers let your children read this sort of thing?" I brought my more modest printing. I have a later edition that has line drawings in it. I mentioned this in class up at Pacific Union College more than thirty years ago and a student, his name was Winn Paulie, came back with the best answer I have ever heard in all these years. "If you took the medical counselor book and cut out all the pictures of disease; cancer of the lip and tongue, etc., and all the symptoms of disease and printed them all by themselves, it would be a useless, repulsive publication. The only justification for printing those things is that they are always presented in the setting of the remedy."

The Bible is very candid in its depiction and description of sin. But it always presents sin in the setting of the remedy. Otherwise the Bible would not be fit to read. But that's why we must read it as a whole. Do you know that there are two books in the Bible that don't even mention God? Not once. But if you take the whole book and put it in the larger setting, those two books, Esther and Song of Solomon, say wonderful things about our God. You see, to be fair with the evidence we must read it as a whole. Or maybe could I read the statement I wrote at the bottom of the Bible Reference Sheet? After going through 108 times, this is my firmest conviction about the Bible:

> The great purpose of the Bible is to reveal the truth about our heavenly Father that we may be won back to Him in love and trust. This truth, this everlasting good news, is to be found in every one of the sixty-six books. But to discover this truth we must learn more

than just what happened to Samson and Delilah, to David and Bathsheba, to Gideon and his fleece. The all-important question is, what do these stories tell us about God?

If one does not ask this question, much of the content of Scripture may seem unrelated to the plan of salvation, even perplexing, sometimes even contradictory. But when one learns to view the Bible as a whole, there emerges a consistent picture of an all-wise and gracious God who seems willing to go to any length to keep in touch with His people, to stoop and reach them where they are, to speak a language they can understand. And the further one reads on book by book, the more one is moved with love and admiration for a God who would be willing to run such risk, to pay such a price, in order to keep open the lines of communication between Himself and His wayward children.

God will save all who trust Him. But He has not asked us to trust Him as a stranger. The Bible—all of it—is a record of God's revelation and demonstration of infinite trustworthiness.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #6, "Evaluating The Evidence" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/6MMCAG

Lou: That ties in; talking about the Bible and trusting the Bible. What do you say to a person who says, "Look, I just want to take the Bible as it reads! And when I read in the Bible that (as for example in Romans 11:33 in that doxology that Paul concludes there with) 'God's ways are inscrutable. How can anyone know the mind of God?' Now, if I just accept the Bible, why can't I just accept that statement and say, 'Why have conversations about God? How can we even know God? I'll just believe the Bible.'"

Graham: Depending on the person who is saying this, one might reply differently, but let's assume this is a very devout person. He really does accept the Scriptures. I would want to make the most of that. I would want to say, "Well, what about these other places in the Bible? Do you accept those too? Or do you just accept this one? "

Lou: What other places?

Graham: Like places in Romans chapter one that say God can be known. In fact, this individual is accepting one verse in Romans and skipping another one. If that doesn't work, then I might turn to a place that says, "Give wine to the poor, that they may forget their misery," and verses like that, until maybe he is shocked into realizing you can't take here a little and there a little.

When you say you accept the Bible, you accept it all the way through. And probably that's what he meant when he said, "I accept God's word. If it says it, I believe it, and that's all there is to it." Then I would want to point to these other verses that say that God can be known—and if He can't

be known, why all this content of Scripture? Why did Christ come to make His Father known? So this use of one little verse can lead us down all kinds of pathways I'm sure he wouldn't want to go.

Lou: So you are saying that the basic attitude of "I want to accept the Bible as it reads," is a good attitude provided it takes the Bible as a whole, all sixty-six books, the total message of Scripture.

Graham: Right. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #3 with Lou Venden, "All God Asks Is Trust" recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/3MMCAG

Lou: There's another question in the whole idea of growing up that comes to mind: Here in our congregation, we're all at different ages and different stages of growth. In the church, in the family of God, won't there always be babes in the truth, ones that need to grow up, new converts, shall we say, maybe not chronologically, but experientially? How could it ever happen that everybody will come to the precise point, "Ah, everyone is grown up right now." What are you saying with this, what is God waiting for?

Graham: That's why earlier on we spent time on perfection. We've put perfection clear out of sight and made it almost unattainable, whereas perfection is growing up, God healing the damage done. Everything depends on what it means to be grown up. One does not have to be ninety to be grown up, or fifty or thirty. I'm impressed with the maturity of Jesus at twelve in these matters—so settled into the truth, that when He talked with those theologians of the day, He understood it better than they did. I think we've suggested it takes too long to be settled into the truth, because perhaps we've made the truth too complicated. I think we will be amazed at how youthful people will be, how recently won to this truth, who are immovably committed to it: the truth that God is like this, and not as His enemies have made Him out to be. So I think an understanding of what it means to be grown up and settled into the truth would make this much more attainable at the end.

Lou: I hear you suggesting something at the very center, something simple and yet profoundly important.

Graham: Both of those things, just the way you said it. The simplest statement is about the most sublime truth that holds the universe together.

Lou: I am struck by a bit of incongruity, it would seem, in the Scripture. Where on the one hand, you are talking about us growing up—and then if you turn to the words of Jesus, over and over again He said we should be as little children. And, if we're not as little children, we can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven. What do you do with those references? For instance, in Luke and in Matthew where He talked about being as little children and seemed to set up a very high priority on that—and you're saying, "Why don't you grow up?"

Graham: When you are putting it especially in the setting of the audience around, and how they were misbehaving, and He takes a little child and says, "Unless you're at least like this, you'll not see the Kingdom." I don't think we should ever lose that—the trust of a little child—the curiosity, the willingness to listen, the willingness to learn. You remember the Laodiceans are not willing to listen to anything, though they're grown up, it would appear. I think that is never to be lost. But Ephesians also says that while we should never lose those precious qualities of childish interest and curiosity and willingness to listen, we should not remain as children, requiring much protection. We should become adults who can stand on their own. I think it's marvelous to see somebody in his seventies, eighties, nineties, who still has the curiosity, interest and trust of a little child.

Lou: We could think of some, couldn't we? So you say he's talking about certain qualities.

Graham: Oh, yes.

Lou: That does lead to another question: "Is it possible, since you put such importance on the basis of Scripture, on growing up, is it possible for a person to tell that he or she is in fact growing up?"

Graham: Since we've used 1 Corinthians 13 on the list, it would be appropriate to note that in the chapter where he says, "I once thought like a child, but now I've given up childish ways," that all the rest of the chapter is on how a grownup behaves. That is, he loves. That is, love is never rude, never impatient, never arrogant, never boasts—look how little children boast, never insists on having its own way. Am I beginning to behave like a grownup? 1 Corinthians 13, the love chapter, describes how a grownup behaves.

I think there's an additional thing, too. Why am I behaving like this? Am I doing it because somebody in authority has told me to and He has power to reward and destroy? Or am I sold on the message of 1 Corinthians 13? I love how Jesus behaved that way. I would like to be like Him. I just agree with Him. He doesn't have to tell me anymore not to murder my mother-in-law. I don't like the idea myself, you see. So eventually we do what is right because it is right. That's all part of growing up.

Lou: You are saying, then, that there is a certain legitimacy in evaluating the way we act, the way we feel about other people, for example.

Graham: I think if we see no progress over the past year, we should be concerned.

Lou: Well, I was thinking about how my dad used to put marks on the wall. Did your dad do that?

Graham: Oh yes, had them all over the laundry wall.

Lou: And we were always—I was interested in whether I was growing more than Morrie. Morrie finally went up, surpassed me.

Graham: I lost to my younger brother.

Lou: But there's a certain danger in focusing on our growth, isn't there, to where my whole concern is how am I doing? And I get my eyes off of—

Graham: That's why we need to go back to our earlier Conversation, "God can completely heal the damage done." I mean, how does one grow up?

Lou: You don't grow by trying to grow.

Graham: We grow up into His likeness. But if I'm not thinking about Him . . .

Lou: How can you grow if you're looking at yourself and hoping to grow? And how can you avoid the self confidence that comes in, for instance, with the Laodiceans who feel very content? I suppose if you'd ask a Laodicean, he'd say, "Well, I've really done quite well. I'm growing very nicely, thank you."

Graham: One of the evidences that one is growing up is that one is not becoming arrogant. There's nothing more stubborn than a little child. "My daddy says it, and he's bigger than your daddy, and therefore it's true." I would say it would be a mark of immaturity for a person of advanced years to be so self-satisfied and so arrogantly stubborn about his opinions. That suggests one is still a child. One grows up. One even enhances this quality of a child, the humility, the willingness to listen, to accept correction, to accept instruction. That should become even greater as one gets older. So an arrogant, "I think I've almost made it now," suggests one may not have even started. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #18 with Lou Venden, "God Waits for His Children to Grow Up" recorded June 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/18MMCAG

Further Study with Ellen White

Make the Bible its own expositor, bringing together all that is said concerning a given subject at different times and under varied circumstances. {RH, October 9, 1883 par. 13}

The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme—of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for the supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. {CT 462.1}

In the earth made new, the redeemed will engage in the occupations and pleasures that brought happiness to Adam and Eve in the beginning. The Eden life will be lived, the life in garden and field. “They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.” Isaiah 65:21, 22. {PK 730.2}

There every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be reached, the highest ambitions realized. And still there will appear new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects of study to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul. {PK 731.1}

By looking constantly to Jesus with the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. As they feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude. This is what it means to live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” This is eating the Bread that comes down from heaven. {DA 391.1}

It is not the plan of God to compel men to yield their wicked unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which to accept. The human mind is endowed with power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture (*Redemption: or the Miracles of Christ,* pp. 112, 113). {1BC 1120.5}

The minds of all who make the Word of God their study will enlarge. Far more than any other study its influence is calculated to increase the powers of comprehension and endow every faculty with a new power. It brings the mind in contact with broad, ennobling principles of truth. It brings all heaven into close connection with human minds, imparting wisdom and knowledge and understanding. {OHC 35.4}

We thank God that the Bible is prepared for the poor man as well as for the learned man. It is fitted for all ages and all classes. {FLB 13.7}

The Bible was not written for the scholar alone; on the contrary, it was designed for the common people. The great truths necessary for salvation are made as clear as noonday; and none will mistake and lose their way except those who follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God. {SC 89.2}

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals

to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith. {SC 105.2}

We must study the truth for ourselves. No living man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who it is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a perfect criterion for us. We are to counsel together, and to be subject to one another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God. We must not become set in our ideas, and think that no one should interfere with our opinions. {RH, June 18, 1889 par. 6}

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. . . . Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions. {Ed 17.2}

All whom God has blessed with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians. They are not requested to believe without evidence; therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, exert his mental powers to search out the truth as it is in Jesus. Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul. We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life. . . . We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures. {RH, March 8, 1887 par. 1}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*
Lesson 9 "Testing *the* Prophets"

Read for this week's study

Daniel 10:7-19; Deuteronomy 13:1-5; Isaiah 8:20; John 11:25; Acts 15:36-39; Jeremiah 28:9, 15-17.

Memory Text

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

I. Introduction
II. Role of the Supernatural
III. Harmony With the Bible
IV. The Incarnation of Christ
V. Positive Fruits
VI. Fulfilled Prophecies
VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration
Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. "The gift of prophecy is more valuable than any diamond, yet someone claiming this gift cannot simply be taken at face value. That claim must be tested. This week we will examine biblical prophets to uncover the biblical principles used to test their authenticity." (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What is the role of the physical phenomena that some prophets experience when in vision, for determining that the prophet is genuine? (Daniel 10:7-19; Sunday's lesson). How helpful are they when you are removed from the prophet by 200 or 2000 years?
3. Why would God put in the Bible a warning like we have in Deuteronomy 13:1-5? Many modern Christians ask the Bible to do something it was never designed to do: provide clear, uniform, timeless answers to every doctrinal, moral, or practical question. Faithful questioning means learning to live with life's (and the Bible's) complexity and letting it train us in discernment, humility, and spiritual maturity.
4. A passage like this shows that the cosmic conflict includes **religious deception**, not just open rebellion. Evil rarely appears only as godless atheism or overt wickedness. It often comes clothed in spirituality, charisma, signs, and authority. One of the deepest lessons of the cosmic conflict is that the enemy does not merely oppose God from the outside; he counterfeits from the inside. Deuteronomy 13 warns us that the decisive issue is

not, “Did something amazing happen?” but, “What kind of worship, allegiance, and picture of God does this produce?”

5. In the cosmic conflict framework, God must educate his people in **moral and theological discernment**. Israel is not to be miracle-addicted, novelty-driven, or authority-dependent in an uncritical way. They need to remember who redeemed them from Egypt and stay loyal to him. The warning thus forms a community who are anchored in prior self-revelation of God’s character and his covenant faithfulness, rather than in the miraculous or spectacular. Truth is measured by fidelity to the true character of God, not by religious impressiveness. Gullibility is not a virtue! If we are naively credulous, we accept every spiritual claim, we become easy prey for the enemy.

6. One of the paradoxes of God’s revelation is that later biblical prophets reveal additional insights into God’s plans and the way of salvation, but they do not contradict the basic principles and concepts already given by God. (Monday’s lesson)

7. Why do we need to connect 1 John 4:3 with 1 Corinthians 3:21-23? (Tuesday’s lesson) Paul starts with various teachers in Corinth (God uses all of them!) and then expands it to the world, then to include being alive or being dead, and then expands it to include everything in the present and the future. But he grounds the whole thing in Christ, who is bigger than any one teacher, set of ideas, the world, or life or death or the present or the future. Paul wants his friends in Corinth to enjoy the truth wherever they find it, to celebrate it and receive it as a good gift from the source of all things, from God.

8. Because religion has given people a lot of categories and labels and ideas which are not helpful, our experience of Christ will consistently transcend whatever boxes we have created. God wants us to have eyes wide open, affirm what should be affirmed, deny what should be denied and being rooted and grounded in the Christ who keeps insisting that all things are ours.

9. Wednesday’s lesson focuses on the positive fruits and Thursday’s lesson on fulfilled prophecies. How can we balance this so that neither becomes a single mechanical filter? God gives us tests of discernment not so that we become suspicious, closed, and controlling, but so that we can remain faithful, humble, and teachable.

10. Accuracy without godly fruit is dangerous, and apparent fruit without truth can also easily mislead. God often speaks through unfamiliar people, unexpected voices, and gifts outside our preferred categories. Jesus himself was rejected partly because he did not fit expected patterns. If we absolutize our discernment rules in a defensive way, we may protect ourselves not only from deception but also from God’s revelation. If we are fearfully closed, we will reject every unfamiliar movement of God. Therefore, let’s be rooted enough not to be deceived, and open enough not to miss God. God’s way is neither gullibility nor control, but wise openness. We need communal discernment, so that we resist deception without resisting the surprising freedom of the Spirit.

11. God moves forward within history and transforms people. That’s why the Bible has such enduring power. It shows that we do not have to settle, that tomorrow does not have to be a repeat of today, that we do not have to be enslaved to fear or despair – that we can change, move forward, heal, and we can leave behind whatever needs to be left behind so that we can step into a better future that God has in store for us all.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now just as God in many and various ways has sought to reveal to us the truth, so in many and various ways, Satan has sought to keep us from seeing and coming to know this truth that is so essential. He sought to deceive us into turning against this truth, even as we might be claiming to believe it. That is the perversity of it. Now recall that his special targets are loyal saints. History records that one of his most successful deceptions has been leading God's people into a certain grateful satisfaction that the Lord has blessed us with so much light that we really don't need to pursue it anymore. Not that we would call that pious satisfaction. We would be condemning that as something not to do. We'd rather call this gratitude that God had so favored us with so much truth that we become conservative and seek to discourage even further inquiry and further investigations. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #17, "Satan's Final Effort to Deceive" recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/17MMCAG

So Paul says, test all things, let there be discernment. And you remember what's coming up, in Hebrews 5 at the end. It says the grownup people "have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil." Do you remember Ephesians last time?

> Let us no longer be children, easily swayed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men with their ingenuity in inventing evil, but let us grow up, and speak the truth in love.

Romans 12, you remember: "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may approve what is excellent." Jesus said there would be false prophets. John says test all the spirits. Then some people wonder, is Ellen White biblical on this point? Of course, I have found her biblical on all points. She is so biblical on this point. "God never asks us to believe anything for which He does not provide adequate evidence. And it is evidence that appeals to the reason. We must bring everything," she says, "within the bounds of reason, lest the enemy so come as to set everything in a disorderly way." She says don't call blind credulity 'faith'. It's the devil's substitute for faith. Presumption is the devil's substitute for faith.

And yet, is it not in the realm of religion—that's the only one—where we are invited to believe without evidence. And that's called very wonderful, because that's faith. And the more willing you are to believe without evidence, the more faith you have. Which would mean that the more you know what you believe in, the less faith you will need. Because eventually, when you really know, you won't need any more faith because you know. So if you really know God, then you don't need any faith. That doesn't make much sense, does it?

We shouldn't be using the word "faith" at all, because faith has come to mean "believing in something you know isn't so," or believing something for which you have inadequate evidence. The word in the Bible is "trust." And the Bible warns us against trusting people we do not know.

Don't even trust prophets who say, "I am a prophet of the Most High, and the angel of the Lord has told me this." "But he lied to him."

Look at all the warnings in the Bible. How about the one who says, "I am God." And he asks Christ to worship him. The father of lies. Of all the decisions we make, there is none that demands more that we inquire as to the evidence, than our decision about God. And yet people spend more time, almost, in selection of their toothpaste, than of their God. Because you don't choose your toothpaste by faith. You choose your God by faith. We even suggest in choosing a life's companion, do get to know her. But with God, don't let your head get in the way of your heart. But when you're choosing a wife, the dormitory dean will say, "Now, don't let your heart run away with you. Get your mind into this, now. Get to know her. Go home and see how she relates to her parents, and all these other things." That's old-fashioned, I know. But anyway, the thought is, do get to know her, before you make your decision. But when it comes to knowing God, oh, you can trust your heart. No, the heart only pumps blood. It has nothing to do with this at all.

A man thinks in his heart, in the Bible, doesn't he? So Paul urged them to be more discerning because of all the fakery and fraud that was going on. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Philippians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:* http://pkp.cc/69MMPOGIA66 (Part 1) http://pkp.cc/70MMPOGIA66 (Part 2)

You remember Jonah went to Nineveh, and he announced, forty days, then they will be destroyed. "And I have the Lord's word on that. My chart is right. Forty days, and you'll be destroyed." And when the forty days were up, he went out to see the fulfillment of the prediction, and it didn't come as he had anticipated. Then he turned to God and said, "I didn't think you'd go through with that, anyway. That's why I ran away. But you put so much pressure on me." And you think of the pressure! You know, if an evangelist was trying to avoid going to a certain city and he spent a while in the belly of a whale, that's pressure! And finally he goes and he gives the message.

And then he says, "God, you confuse me. You make me go and deliver the message, and then you don't come through with it. I'm angry!" And God says, "But aren't you pleased that the inhabitants of Nineveh have repented?" But Jonah was more concerned about his reputation. As an advent preacher, he'd given a prophecy, and a date. That's what the charts can sometimes lead us to do. And as you said, the greater concern is that God looked good. And that God did not destroy the inhabitants of Nineveh when they repented made him look very good, and it won some to repentance.

The appeal at the end is so moving in Jonah. "Don't you care that there are 120,000 people in that city that don't know right from wrong, and there are even a lot of cattle? Don't you care, Jonah?" But he didn't care about God's reputation. As we study the prophecies here, what do they say about God? Do the prophecies even leave room for delay, by the way? Well, the book of

Revelation certainly does. It even speaks of it. “Hold! Do not let these events occur until my servants are sealed in their foreheads.” It’s hard not to get into Revelation when we’re reading Daniel.

As I was reviewing this before coming, it’s significant to me how Jesus commented on the purpose of prophecy. Not just Daniel, of course, but others; but there are so many in Daniel that are so specific. Look at Matthew 24. Jesus himself made some prophecies, and he commented on the purpose of them. Matthew 24:25. You remember they asked how soon he would come. “Well,” he said, “several things will occur before I come.” In fact, verse 23:

> Then if anyone says to you, “Lo, here is the Christ!” or “There he is!” do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Lo, I have told you beforehand [suggesting that he had warned them in advance, so they’d be prepared].

But he gave an additional reason in John 13:19. And I think prophecies have these dual purposes, suggesting it does pay to work them out, indeed. There is warning, unless, of course, we misinterpret them and are looking for the wrong thing. So it pays to study carefully. But an additional reason is given in 13:19: “I tell you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Daniel, recorded February 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

http://pkp.cc/39MMPOGIA66 (Part 1) http://pkp.cc/40MMPOGIA66 (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

I am afraid of anything that would have a tendency to turn the mind away from the solid evidences of the truth as revealed in God’s Word. I am afraid of it; I am afraid of it. We must bring our minds within the bounds of reason, lest the enemy so come in as to set everything in a disorderly way. {2SM 43.2}

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. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested. {4SP 411.1}

The way in which Christ worked was to preach the Word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way; for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God’s servants today could not work by means of miracles; because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought. {1NL 105.4}

Even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be tested by the Word of God. The Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, always leads to the Scriptures.—*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, April 13, 1891. {1SM 43.2}

The Bible is our guide in the safe paths that lead to eternal life. God has inspired men to write that which will present the truth to us, which will attract, and which, if practiced, will enable the receiver to obtain moral power to rank among the most highly educated minds. The minds of all who make the Word of God their study will enlarge. Far more than any other study its influence is calculated to increase the powers of comprehension and endow every faculty with a new power. It brings the mind in contact with broad, ennobling principles of truth. It brings all heaven into close connection with human minds, imparting wisdom and knowledge and understanding.—YI, Oct 13, 1898, (SD 70.) {1MCP 98.1}

Could our spiritual vision be quickened, we should see souls bowed under oppression and burdened with grief, pressed as a cart beneath sheaves, and ready to die in discouragement. We should see angels flying quickly to the aid of these tempted ones, forcing back the hosts of evil that encompass them, and placing their feet on the sure foundation. The battles waging between the two armies are as real as those fought by the armies of this world, and on the issue of the spiritual conflict eternal destinies depend. {PK 175.3}

In the vision of the prophet Ezekiel there was the appearance of a hand beneath the wings of the cherubim. This is to teach God's servants that it is divine power that gives success. Those whom God employs as His messengers are not to feel that His work is dependent on them. Finite beings are not left to carry this burden of responsibility. He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, will carry forward His work. He will thwart the purposes of wicked men and will bring to confusion the counsels of those who plot mischief against His people. He who is the King, the Lord of hosts, sitteth between the cherubim, and amidst the strife and tumult of nations He guards His children still. When the strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of wrath shall strike through the hearts of His enemies, His people will be safe in His hands. {PK 176.1}

While there are different degrees of development and different manifestations of His power to meet the wants of men in the different ages, God's work in all time is the same. The Teacher is the same. God's character and His plan are the same. With Him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17. {Ed 50.3}

The heart of God yearns over His earthly children with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. The Saviour's life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings,—all are enlisted in behalf of man's redemption. {SC 21.2}

It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light, and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day

study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought, and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help, we are to form our opinions for ourselves, as we are to answer for ourselves before God. {RH, June 28, 1906 par. 7}

But beware of rejecting that which is truth. The great danger with our people has been that of depending upon men and making flesh their arm. Those who have not been in the habit of searching the Bible for themselves, or weighing evidence, have confidence in the leading men and accept the decisions they make; and thus many will reject the very messages God sends to His people, if these leading brethren do not accept them. {TM 106.4}

Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}

The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 22.1}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to reveal, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. . . . {8T 265.5}

Christ revealed all of God that sinful human beings could bear without being destroyed. He is the divine Teacher, the Enlightener. Had God thought us in need of revelations other than those made through Christ and in His written word, He would have given them. {8T 266.1}

Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character unveiled. Rebellion can never again arise. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy. By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union. {DA 26.2}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, a God of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. By the world's Redeemer the thick darkness with which Satan had enshrouded the throne of the Deity was swept away, and the Father was again manifest to men as the Light of life. {RH, February 15, 1912 par. 4}

God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. {FLB 129.2}

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {8T 286.4}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*
Lesson 10 "Prophetic Authority *and* Relevance"

Read for this week's study

Exodus 4:10-16; Luke 8:22-25; John 3:1-10; Acts 16:25-34; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; Luke 7:28.

Memory Text

"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

I. Introduction
II. Mediating God's Authority
III. The Authority of Jesus
IV. Biblical Authority
V. Organizational Authority
VI. Canonical and Non-canonical Prophets
VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration
Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. "This week we will examine what authority biblical prophets possess, and what, if any, authority is held by prophets who never wrote a book of the Bible, such as Nathan the prophet, John the Baptist, and, yes, even Ellen G. White." (Sabbath afternoon)
2. How do you understand the memory text (Hebrews 4:12)? What is the larger context? Why is the purpose of this "sword" to cleanse and heal? What are the most common ways people attempt to defend themselves against the impact of God's word (4:13)?
3. In order to understand the authority of Old Testament prophets, New Testament prophets, and by extension the authority of a modern, non-canonical prophet, we watch how God exercises his authority in the Bible.
4. God is not a "helicopter parent" who "hovers over" and directs every aspect of his children's lives so that they can "succeed". Wise parents know that their job is to equip their children to acquire skill sets for navigating the ups and downs of their life, to experience failure and triumph, pain and joy and handle life well, to be

independent thinkers, so that they become mature, well-functioning adults. That's why God gave us the Bible, which by being *ancient*, *ambiguous* (cf. views on slavery, role of women, violence, political power) and *diverse*, wants to form us, nudge us to grow to maturity, teach us the sacred responsibility to commune with the Spirit, and walk in the path of wisdom. Thus, there is plenty of room for pondering, debating, thinking, even freedom to fail and learn through the process.

5. God is a secure and wise parent, who through the Bible, is prodding us toward spiritual maturity in secure atmosphere of unconditional love and acceptance, so we can learn to navigate life well and acquire wisdom (cf. James 1:5).

6. Where in your life can you now see how God was molding and preparing you for what you are today (cf. Exodus 4:10-16; 2:11-15; 3:1-13)? As he did with Moses, why does God not waste any experience? (Sunday's lesson)

7. What does the way Jesus handled the question regarding his authority (Matthew 21:23-27 cf. Luke 20:1-8) teach us about how God, and pharisees, operate? (Monday's lesson) What is behind it? In what sense is it more than a trick designed to get them muddled or embarrassed (though it succeeded in doing that as well)? How is the fact that Jesus is the rightful Lord challenging the powers of the present world?

8. What is the role of biblical authority (Tuesday's lesson) and organizational authority (Wednesday's lesson) especially in the context of cosmic conflict? How do the two forms of authority function — not as rivals, but not as equals? How can the church (organization) model God's use of authority, reflect the Lordship of Christ, and serve the mission of God?

9. God's authority is not domination, "because I said so." His authority is grounded in truth, love, freedom, transparency, faithfulness, and self-giving service. The clearest revelation of divine authority is not Pharaoh's throne, Caesar's empire, or even Sinai's thunder in isolation, but Christ crucified — the One who has all authority, yet kneels to wash the disciples' feet. This exposes the lies of the enemy, tells the story of God's faithfulness, and invites human beings into intelligent trust rather than blind submission.

10. The church does not say, "God has spoken; therefore, submit." It says, "Come and see what God is like; He is worthy of your trust." God does not merely assert that He is righteous; He reveals it. He allows His character to be examined. He wins by truth, love, patience, and self-sacrifice, not by coercive force.

11. What does the existence of canonical prophets (like Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel) and non-canonical prophets (Gad & Nathan [1 Chron 29:29]; Ahijah & Iddo [2 Chron 9:29]) communicate and imply (cf. 1 Kings 11:29-39; Luke 7:28)? (Thursday's lesson)

12. How does this apply to **formative** prophets: prophets who made exceptional impact on God's people especially in critical and/or transitional times (like Moses, John the Baptist, Ellen White) and **informative** prophets – people whose role is to build up,

encourage and rebuke or exhort (1 Cor 14:3)? See 1 Corinthians 14:29-33; Acts 21:4, 10-11. Can you see the shift between the OT & NT in the biblical storyline?

13. If the research into spiritual gifts shows that 6-8% of members have the gift of prophecy (just like the gift of evangelism), why do we not see more manifestations of it?

14. What do you need to do to have a balanced view of the ministry of Ellen White and benefit from her writings today both personally and as a local and global church?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Because truth and evidence were on Christ's side, He spoke with great authority, with real authority. And you know those two familiar verses that follow. Matthew 7:29: "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority..." (NIV). And Luke 4:32 adds: "His message had authority." (NIV) Now in what did His authority lie? And how can we recognize the voice of true authority?

Did Jesus base His authority on His claims? No, He inspired the warning against accepting mere claims. When John inquired if He really was the Messiah, Jesus didn't just say, "Yes, I am." He offered evidence to John. Well, did He base His authority on miracles or show of power? No, it was Jesus who inspired the warning, "Don't trust miracles if they are not associated with the truth." In fact, He even turned the crowds away when they were following Him for the miraculous food and the miraculous healing. How Jesus must have been tempted to use His power when He was winning so few! He knew the people were expecting a Messiah who would come with great physical power to drive off their enemies and establish an earthly kingdom. But He wouldn't do it. It would have misrepresented the truth and God's way of exercising His authority.

Well, did Jesus base His authority on His loud voice and bombastic manner, as is so customary of many evangelists today. Just read the Gospels. The people marveled at the gracious words that came from His lips. "Blessed are the humble in spirit. . . . Blessed are the meek." You simply cannot shout those words. People who shout don't teach things like that. Christ's manner of speaking must have been as music to His audiences.

Well, was His authority based on who He was? He ***was*** the Son of God, the Creator of the Universe, worshiped by all the angels. Remember the story of Emmaus. He didn't reveal who He was until He had led them through the Scriptures and until their decision was based on evidence, not on His authority as a person. Yet, think what person He was. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #7, "The Question of Authority"

recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/7MMCAG

In fact, Ephesians says the whole purpose of the church is to help people grow up to perfection and maturity. The Bible explains why. Daniel 12, Revelation, the warnings of Christ, and of Paul, tell us that we face a time of confusion and deception such as the world has never seen. If we are still babes in the truth, we will never survive. And so God in mercy waits for us to grow up, and to be as settled into the truth as Job was. In fact, that has such a motivating message for the church, that I have a whole evening under that title; "God Waits For His Children To Grow Up," and it's the reason for His merciful delay. You see, it is not an arbitrary requirement that we grow up. It is absolutely necessary if we're going to survive, that we must not be satisfied to be babes in the truth; but to grow up and be able to distinguish between right and wrong. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #14, "God Can Completely Heal the Damage Done" recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/14MMCAG

Before we begin to discuss the notable proverbs of our choice, and we ought to all join in more tonight, we might consider at least two purposes for including this collection among the sixty-six. Wouldn't it seem apparent, many commentators on Proverbs have made this observation, that religion is eminently practical? It has to do with the way we live from one day to the next. Because so often, religion is thought of in terms of creed, and ritual, and ceremony, and being separated from life. If you want to be really religious, you won't be too involved in everyday life.

On the contrary, Proverbs indicates that religion has very much to do with the way we live. The very religious person is wise, disciplined, industrious, practical, useful; he's not a fool. Then another question that the book provokes; how could Solomon be so wise? Remember all that he wrote about women in Proverbs, and then make such mistakes? And why would God give him such wisdom if He knew that Solomon would not live in harmony with all these things that he knew and taught so well? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Proverbs, recorded January 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

http://pkp.cc/29MMPOGIA66 (Part 1) http://pkp.cc/30MMPOGIA66 (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

There is no caste with God. He ignores everything of the kind. All souls are of value with Him. Laboring for the salvation of the soul is employment worthy of the highest honor. It matters not what may be the form of our labor, or among what class, whether high or low. In God's sight these distinctions will not affect its true worth. The sincere, earnest, contrite soul, however ignorant, is precious in the sight of the Lord. He places His own signet upon men, judging, not by their rank, not by their wealth, not by their intellectual greatness, but by their oneness with Christ. The unlearned, the outcast, the slave, if he has made the most of his opportunities and privileges, if he has cherished the light given him of God, has done all that is required. The world may call him ignorant, but God calls him wise and good, and thus his name stands registered in the books of heaven. God will fit him up to do Him honor, not only in heaven, but on the earth. {GW 332.1}

In this work Moses was drawn nearer to the Chief Shepherd. He became closely united to the Holy One of Israel. No longer did he plan to do a great work. He sought to do faithfully as unto God the work committed to his charge. He recognized the presence of God in his surroundings. All nature spoke to him of the Unseen One. He knew God as a personal God, and, in meditating upon His character he grasped more and more fully the sense of His presence. He found refuge in the everlasting arms. {MH 475.1}

The lessons of Christlike meekness, lowliness of heart, reverence for sacred things, are taught nowhere effectively except in the school of Christ. Moses had been taught to expect flattery and praise because of his superior abilities; but now he was to learn a different lesson. As a shepherd of sheep, Moses was taught to care for the afflicted, to nurse the sick, to seek patiently after the straying, to bear long with the unruly, to supply with loving solicitude the wants of the young lambs and the necessities of the old and feeble. As these phases of his character were developed, he was drawn nearer to his Chief Shepherd. He became united to, submerged in, the Holy One of Israel. He believed in the great God. He held communion with the Father through humble prayer. He looked to the Highest for an education in spiritual things, and for a knowledge of his duty as a faithful shepherd. His life became so closely linked with heaven that God talked with him face to face. {FE 343.1}

After this experience, Moses heard the call from heaven to exchange his shepherd's crook for the rod of authority; to leave his flock of sheep and take the leadership of Israel. {MH 475.2}

The divine command given to Moses found him self-distrustful, slow of speech, and timid. He was overwhelmed with a sense of his incapacity to be a mouthpiece for God to Israel. But having once accepted the work, he entered upon it with his whole heart, putting all his trust in the Lord. The greatness of his mission called into exercise the best powers of his mind. God blessed his ready obedience, and he became eloquent, hopeful, self-possessed, and well fitted for the greatest work ever given to man. This is an example of what God does to strengthen the

character of those who trust Him fully and give themselves unreservedly to His commands. {PP 255.1}

[Christ] did not deal in abstract theories, but in that which is essential to the development of character; that which will enlarge man's capacity for knowing God, and increase his power to do good. He spoke of those truths that relate to the conduct of life and that unite man with eternity. {LHU 177.2}

Instead of directing the people to study men's theories about God, His Word, or His works, He taught them to behold Him, as manifested in His works, in His Word, and by His providences. He brought their minds in contact with the mind of the Infinite. {LHU 177.3}

Christ's manner of teaching was beautiful and attractive, and it was ever characterized by simplicity. He unfolded the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven through the use of figures and symbols with which His hearers were familiar; and the common people heard Him gladly, for they could comprehend His words. There were no high-sounding words used, to understand which it was necessary to consult a dictionary. {CT 240.2}

Jesus illustrated the glories of the kingdom of God by the use of the experiences and occurrences of earth. In compassionate love and tenderness He cheered and comforted and instructed all who heard Him; for grace was poured upon His lips that He might convey to men in the most attractive way the treasures of truth. {CT 240.3}

In every human being, however fallen, He beheld a son of God, one who might be restored to the privilege of His divine relationship.—*Education*, p. 79. (1903) {Ev 55.3}

Jesus had nothing to do with the various subjects of dissension among the Jews. It was His work to present the truth. His words shed a flood of light upon the teachings of the patriarchs and prophets, and the Scriptures came to men as a new revelation. Never before had His hearers perceived such a depth of meaning in the Word of God. {LHU 172.7}

His tender compassion fell with a touch of healing upon weary and troubled hearts. Even amid the turbulence of angry enemies He was surrounded with an atmosphere of peace. The beauty of His countenance, the loveliness of His character, above all, the love expressed in look and tone, drew to Him all who were not hardened in unbelief. Had it not been for the sweet, sympathetic spirit that shone out in every look and word, He would not have attracted the large congregations that He did. The afflicted ones who came to Him felt that He linked His interest with theirs as a faithful and tender friend, and they desired to know more of the truths He taught. Heaven was brought near. They longed to abide in His presence, that the comfort of His love might be with them continually. {DA 254.4}

During His ministry Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching. His miracles testified to the truth of His words, that He came not to destroy but to save. His righteousness

went before Him, and the glory of the Lord was His rearward. Wherever He went, the tidings of His mercy preceded Him. Where He had passed, the objects of His compassion were rejoicing in health, and making trial of their new-found powers. Crowds were collecting around them to hear from their lips the works that the Lord had wrought. His voice was the first sound that many had ever heard, His name the first word they had ever spoken, His face the first they had ever looked upon. Why should they not love Jesus, and sound His praise? As He passed through the towns and cities He was like a vital current, diffusing life and joy wherever He went. {DA 350.3}

It is Satan's work to fill men's hearts with doubt. He leads them to look upon God as a stern judge. He tempts them to sin, and then to regard themselves as too vile to approach their heavenly Father or to excite His pity. The Lord understands all this. Jesus assures His disciples of God's sympathy for them in their needs and weaknesses. Not a sigh is breathed, not a pain felt, not a grief pierces the soul, but the throb vibrates to the Father's heart. {DA 356.2}

When Jesus speaks of the new heart, He means the mind, the life, the whole being. To have a change of heart is to withdraw the affections from the world, and fasten them upon Christ. To have a new heart is to have a new mind, new purposes, new motives. What is the sign of a new heart?—a changed life. There is a daily, hourly dying to selfishness and pride (YI Sept. 26, 1901). {4BC 1164.10}

The Majesty of heaven was not discerned in the disguise of humanity. He was the divine Teacher sent from God, the glorious Treasure given to humanity. He was fairer than the sons of men, but His matchless glory was hidden under a cover of poverty and suffering. He veiled His glory in order that divinity might touch humanity, and the treasure of immense value was not discerned by the human race.... {TMK 58.4}

A guardian angel is appointed to every follower of Christ. These heavenly watchers shield the righteous from the power of the wicked one. . . . The angels appointed to minister to the children of God have at all times access to His presence. {GC 512.2}

Thus God's people, exposed to the deceptive power and unsleeping malice of the prince of darkness, and in conflict with all the forces of evil, are assured of the unceasing guardianship of heavenly angels. {GC 513.1}

Though enemies may thrust them into prison, yet dungeon walls cannot cut off the communication between their souls and Christ. One who sees their every weakness, who is acquainted with every trial, is above all earthly powers; and angels will come to them in lonely cells, bringing light and peace from heaven. The prison will be as a palace; for the rich in faith dwell there, and the gloomy walls will be lighted up with heavenly light as when Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises at midnight in the Philippian dungeon. {GC 627.1}

The character of God as revealed by Christ invites our faith and love, for we have a Father whose mercy and compassion fail not. At every step of our journey heavenward He will be with us to guide in every perplexity, to give us help in every temptation. {HP 16.4}

To those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance, angels of God draw near. The Holy Spirit is given to open to them the rich treasures of the truth. {COL 59.3}

The path where God leads the way may lie through the desert or the sea, but it is a safe path. {PP 290.3}

We can see only a little way before us; “but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” He never becomes confused. He sits above the confusion and distractions of the earth, and all things are opened to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He can order that which His providence sees is best. {ML 10.4}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*
Lesson 11 "Prophetic Manifestation *in* Crucial Moments"

Read for this week's study

2 Peter 2:5; Judges 4:4-16; 1 Kings 18:21, 38, 39; Isaiah 59:1-4; Nehemiah 9:30; Revelation 1:1-3.

Memory Text

"Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

I. Introduction
II. Disaster Warning
III. A Mother in Israel
IV. A Call for Repentance
V. Hope in Exile
VI. A Prophet for the Time of Waiting
VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration
Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. "This week's study will look back at crucial times in salvation history when God used prophets to make His will clear to His people and to the wider world. We will also explore the role of Ellen G. White's inspired ministry at pivotal times in the growth of the Adventist movement." (Sabbath afternoon)

2. In what remarkable way does the memory text (Amos 3:7) define the kind of sovereignty God chooses to exercise? God's sovereignty is not secrecy, manipulation, or arbitrary power. It is sovereignty exercised with disclosure, warning, invitation, and moral intelligibility. God's transparency does not remove mystery, but it removes suspicion.

3. Prophecy is therefore not merely prediction, God foretelling the future. It is a disclosure of God's character, God opening His purposes. It is God giving His people enough insight to interpret history morally and spiritually. How does prophecy protect God's actions from misunderstanding? How does it prevent divine judgment from appearing impulsive? The purpose of prophetic ministry is to reveal that God's acts are not sudden eruptions of anger, but the sorrowful consequences of rejected reality and God's mercy.

4. In what sense is Noah a powerful case study of Amos 3:7 in action (cf. Genesis 6:5-9; Hebrews 11:7; 2 Peter 2:5; Sunday's lesson)? Before God acts in judgment, He reveals, warns, pleads, and provides a visible witness (and a reasonable time span). Noah is therefore not merely an ark-builder; he is part of God's transparent way of governing.

5. Why is it deeply significant that Noah is called "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5)? Noah does not merely preach survival. He preached righteousness. Noah's ark was not only a boat; it was God's public sermon. Every plank testified that the loving God judges evil, but only after He has warned, waited, pleaded, and provided a way of salvation for everybody.

6. How does Deborah fit into the same pattern with what she did for Israel? (See Judges 4:4-16; 5:1-5; Monday's lesson.) Deborah is not simply an inspiring leader or a wise administrator. She is a prophetic instrument through whom God interprets Israel's situation and announces His intention (4:4).

7. God promises deliverance, but He calls Barak and the tribes to act. Deborah's prophetic word does not bypass human agency; it awakens it. She says, in effect: "God has promised. Now rise, gather, march, trust, participate." Deborah also models the kind of God she represents. God does not simply command from afar; He goes with His people. He reveals, calls, accompanies, and delivers.

8. Tuesday's lesson focuses on the transition between the era of Judges (2:16-19) to the monarchy. What changes did this bring to the prophetic office in Israel? From now on the king will become the highest political and military authority in Israel. However, he is not the highest spiritual authority. The highest spiritual authority in Israel is the prophet. The rest of Israel's history will be a history of conflict between the kings and prophets (e.g.: Samuel vs. Saul; Nathan vs. David; Elijah vs. Ahab; Jeremiah vs. Zedekiah).

9. How did the prophetic ministry function during the exile (Wednesday's lesson)? It explains why the exile happened, reveals that God has not abandoned His people, calls them to repentance, and exposes the deeper issue: exile did not happen because of God's unwillingness to save, but Israel's resistance to His voice.

10. The Babylonian exile reveals not divine rejection, but rejected divine appeal. Matthew 23:37 is one of the clearest windows into God's heart. Jesus does not say, "I did not want to gather you." He does not say, "You were excluded because of your sins." He says, "I wanted… but you were not willing." The tragedy of Israel's history is not lack of divine desire, but resistance to divine love. Through the prophets God tried to gather, protect, warn, and heal His people.

11. What change does the inauguration of God's kingdom through Jesus bring? How does this affect a shift in prophetic ministry (1 Corinthians 14:29-33; Acts 21:4, 21:10-11)? What was John called to do according to Revelation 1:1-3? (Thursday's lesson) What is God's purpose for life in the eschatological time of waiting? Why did he call a prophetic voice and community?

12. What can we learn from our theological heritage? What contribution does Ellen White make and what contribution are we here to make both as individuals and as a community of believers?

13. God's final prophetic word is, "Here is who God, who Jesus is. Here is what kind of kingdom is coming. Here is how to live faithfully until He comes." God's purpose in this waiting time is not passive waiting for a celestial rescue mission, but the formation of a faithful witnessing community — a compassionate group of people who understand history through the Lamb, resist the deceptions of the dragon and the beast, worship the Creator, embody the testimony of Jesus, and demonstrate before the world and the universe the values of God's kingdom and that God is trustworthy.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: "On the subject of the Flood, it is apparent that God didn't do things right the first time. So He had to send a Flood and start all over again. What would you do with that?" Is that possible?

Graham: Especially since it says, "It Repented Him. . . ." Or some versions say, "He was sorry that He had made man." And as you go through the sixty-six, you run into this several times where God is pictured as not being too aware of what is going on and certainly not having much foreknowledge and even not being as observant as we think. For example, when He comes to the Garden of Eden, He says, "Where are you? Where are you?" And Adam says, "We're over here." "Oh, thank you. I couldn't see." And then when He came to Abraham (before the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah) He said, "Abraham, I've come down to check out the reports I've received, to see if they are correct or not." Now we've all lived assuming that God is getting very good reporting. Apparently not; He had to come down and say, "I'm checking this out Myself."

And there are many places in the Bible like that, where God talks in very human language. And we can understand why He does it, I believe. And so in this case with the Flood, "God was sorry." "It grieved him that He had made man." My understanding would be, He foreknew all of this, and He had now come to the time when there were only eight people left on this planet with whom He could communicate. And the answers to the questions in the Great Controversy had not yet been given. And God, as it were, turns to the universe and says, "I'm really going to test your faith in Me. The next thing you see will stun you." And He drowned all but eight to preserve one little point of contact with the human race that He might go on unfolding His plan.

I'm sure the devil cried, "Foul! I told you He's that kind of a God. You either love Him, or if you don't love Him, He'll drown you, or He'll burn you or have you stoned or swallow you up." The risk He ran in bringing the Flood suggests just how important it was to do what He did. The risk was that great. Had He not done that, everything would have ended at that time. And the

answers had not yet been given. So again, the Flood has to be put in the total setting here with the angels watching. God ran a great risk of being misunderstood at that time. But I would understand it was all in His plan.

Lou: You say that everything would have ended at that point. Do you mean by that, that the whole thing was so evil that it would self-destruct?

Graham: Well those eight that got on the boat weren't that good, you remember. Ham wasn't too virtuous, and his father hadn't taken the temperance pledge yet. Those eight weren't saved because they were good. I believe they were saved because they got on the boat. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #6 with Lou Venden, "Evaluating the Evidence" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/6MMCAG

We need to take that larger view of those earlier books, those earlier events. The view we're helped to see by reading the sixty-sixth book. The war up in heaven, the involvement of the whole universe. And God now patiently revealing the truth about Himself through these experiences of the descendants of His friend Abraham. And it is tedious at times. That's the way it was. And the behavior of God's people, utterly reprehensible much of the time. And this is God's way of revealing the truth about Himself. And the very fact that it takes so long speaks well of our God, for look at the last words of 2 Chronicles 36:15, 16. Look at this summary now. All the years from the calling of Abraham, to the Exodus from Egypt, to the entrance to Canaan. Now down to the Babylonian captivity. Now we're down to about 600 B.C.:

> The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words, and scoffing at his prophets, till the wrath of the LORD rose against his people [that is, He gave them up], till there was no remedy.

That's when He gives us up, when there is no remedy. But that leaves us with one last question that's important for this evening. God doesn't seem to succeed very often, does He? He's let the northern tribes go into captivity, and they're gone. The southern tribes now, He's going to give them up because there's no remedy. They go into Babylonian captivity. He brings them back. A few come. And look at all the troubles they got into. What's God waiting for? What's He trying to say?

Does the misbehavior of His people work against His purposes in the eyes of the whole onlooking family of the universe? Or to use the words of Paul, does the fact that God's own people, the Israelites were unfaithful and untrustworthy, does this nullify the faithfulness and the trustworthiness of God? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of

God in All 66 – 1 & 2 Chronicles, recorded November 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

http://pkp.cc/21MMPOGIA66 (Part 1) http://pkp.cc/22MMPOGIA66 (Part 2)

Lou: "You said that the book of Revelation was especially directed to the Christians of the time at which it was written. Can you explain that a bit more? I have always understood, or been told, that it has special relevance to the present day church instead. What do you think about that?"

Graham: I would like to say (as I did last week) that I believe the book of Revelation was written first for the Christians of that time. They were so discouraged, wondering why the Lord had not yet come. And all the heresy in the church, the opposition, and there was persecution. They needed the message of that book to look a little higher and see the larger view; to realize that they were caught up in a great controversy, but God has already won the war. They needed to know all of that.

But then I would want to say that we need it, too. It was written just as much for us as for them. Because I believe we live in a day when we are faced with the very same problems. And we need precisely the same message of the book. Not so much to schedule the dates and events to come, interesting and helpful as that may be, but I believe the major message of the book of Revelation for God's people today is: *Look a little higher, take a larger view of things. Realize that God has won the war.* And our assignment and privilege is to go out and tell people that He's won the war—and on what basis. And act more like members of a winning team instead of so often on the defensive.

Lou: You're saying that perhaps the meaning for us now may be even better understood as we understand its impact then.

Graham: With our perspective from now, it should mean even more. But I would still say that it was first for them. They needed it. But also for us; it's the same message. It didn't have one message for them and a schedule of events for us. I believe the consistent message of that book is, take the larger view of things. Set everything in the background of the Great Controversy. It makes everything so much more significant. I think that there's something worth saying that is positive and optimistic. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #2 with Lou Venden, "What Went Wrong in God's Universe" recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/2MMCAG

Further Study with Ellen White

In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God. {COL 38.1}

God is the eternal, uncreated fountain of all good. All who look to Him and trust in Him find Him to be this. To those who serve Him, cleaving to Him as their heavenly Father, He gives the assurance that He will fulfil His promises. His joy will be in their hearts, and their joy will be full. —Letter 203, Sept. 14, 1903, "To Those in Positions of Responsibility in Nashville Publishing House." {TDG 266.6}

Those who surrender their lives to His guidance and to His service will never be placed in a position for which He has not made provision. Whatever our situation, if we are doers of His word, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexity, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend. {MH 248.2}

The enemy can never take out of the hand of Christ the one who is simply trusting in His promises. If the soul is trusting and working obediently, the mind is susceptible to divine impressions, and the light of God shines in, enlightening the understanding. What privileges we have in Christ Jesus! {SD 351.4}

If you will ask help of God you need not ask in vain. In order to encourage us to have confidence and trust He comes near us by His holy Word and Spirit, and seeks in a thousand ways to win our confidence. But in nothing does He take more delight than in receiving the weak who come to Him for strength. If we will find heart and voice to pray, He will be sure to find an ear to hear and an arm to save. {TDG 194.5}

The religion of Jesus Christ is not merely to prepare us for the future immortal life; it is to enable us to live the Christ life here on earth. Jesus is not only our pattern, He is also our friend and our guide, and by taking hold of His strong arm and partaking of His Spirit, we may walk "even as he walked." {TMK 298.6}

In the visible creation, divine wisdom is manifested in an endless variety of processes. Uniformity is not the rule that is followed in the kingdom of nature. Neither is it the rule that is followed in the kingdom of grace. In different ways God works to attain one purpose—the saving of souls. By different methods the gracious Redeemer deals with different minds. The change of heart is as truly wrought out by one process as by another. It is the Lord working upon minds and molding characters. {TDG 67.2}

Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not *desire* to be set free, if we *will* not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

“Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7, 8. {SC 34.2}

Repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ are the fruits of the renewing power of the grace of the Spirit. Repentance represents the process by which the soul seeks to reflect the image of Christ to the world. {ML 49.3}

Christ gives them the breath of His own Spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through cooperation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence. {ML 49.4}

Sin not only shuts away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. {PK 233.1}

God does not compel men to give up their unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which they will accept. The human mind is endowed with power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture. Had the Jews laid by their prejudice and compared written prophecy with the facts characterizing the life of Jesus, they would have perceived a beautiful harmony between the prophecies and their fulfillment in the life and ministry of the lowly Galilean. {DA 458.3}

In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience. The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin. {COL 77.1}

The Lord will not compel men to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God; He sets before the human agent good and evil, and makes plain what will be the sure result of following one course or the other. Christ invites us, saying, “Follow Me.” But we are never forced to walk in His footsteps. If we do walk in His footsteps, it is the result of deliberate choice. As we see the life and character of Christ, strong desire is awakened to be like Him in character; and we follow on to know the Lord, and to know His goings forth are prepared as the morning. We then begin to realize that “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”—R. & H., March 31, 1896. {CS 138.1}

Today the truths of Scripture are to be brought before the great men of the world in order that they may choose between obedience to God’s law and allegiance to the prince of evil. God sets everlasting truth before them—truth that will make them wise unto salvation, but He does not

force them to accept it. If they turn from it, He leaves them to themselves, to be filled with the fruit of their own doings. {AA 241.2}

Men have the power to quench the Spirit of God; the power of choosing is left with them. They are allowed freedom of action. They may be obedient through the name and grace of our Redeemer, or they may be disobedient, and realize the consequences. {FLB 58.3}

The Spirit of God keeps evil under the control of conscience. When people exalt themselves above the influence of the Spirit, they reap a harvest of iniquity. . . . Warnings have less and less power over them. They gradually lose their fear of God. They sow to the flesh; they will reap corruption. The harvest of the seed that they themselves have sown is ripening. . . . Their heart of flesh becomes a heart of stone. Resistance to truth confirms them in iniquity. . . . All should be intelligent in regard to the agency by which the soul is destroyed. It is not because of any decree that God has sent out against men or women. He does not make them spiritually blind. God gives sufficient light and evidence to enable them to distinguish truth from error. But He does not force them to receive truth. He leaves them free to choose the good or to choose the evil. If people resist evidence that is sufficient to guide their judgment in the right direction and choose evil once, they will do this more readily the second time. The third time they will still more eagerly withdraw from God and choose to stand on the side of Satan. And in this course they will continue until they are confirmed in evil and believe the lie they have cherished as truth.—*Manuscript 126*, 1901 (*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, pp. 183, 184). {CTr 103.4}

We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christ-like life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls. {DA 347.3}

As God called Daniel to witness for Him in Babylon, so He calls us to be His witnesses in the world today. In the smallest as well as the largest affairs of life He desires us to reveal to men the principles of His kingdom. {COL 357.1}

It is the love of God continually transferred to man that enables him to impart light. Into the hearts of all who are united to God by faith the golden oil of love flows freely, to shine out again in good works, in real, heartfelt service for God. {COL 418.5}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*
Lesson 12 "End-time Prophetic Revelations"

Read for this week's study

Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:1-21; Ephesians 4:11-14; Revelation 12:17; Revelation 19:10; Acts 2:36-42.

Memory Text

" 'And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days' " (Joel 2:28, 29 NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

I. Introduction
II. The Promise of Joel
III. Pentecost
IV. Gifts of the Spirit
V. The End-time Remnant
VI. Modern Manifestations
VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration
Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. "Last week we learned that God spoke through prophets to His people at crucial moments. This week, we will examine the prophetic gift at the end of time—its special function and perpetuity—as well as the role of Ellen G. White's prophetic ministry as the second coming of Jesus draws closer." (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Why is the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 so significant? (Sunday's lesson) What does God promise to do in the last days? In the OT times, three "offices/positions" were anointed (=symbol of special access to God and his Spirit): king, priest, prophet. What will happen when the Spirit is fully at work and unquenched (John 7:39)?
3. After the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the heaven's floodgates were to open, and the Spirit would flow inexhaustibly. When that occurred, the Spirit would be available to all people—not to just a few privileged leaders, not even to a privileged race, not to men only, but to all. As a result, a new community was created by the Holy Spirit—a community where differences of ***race*** would become irrelevant since the Spirit was being poured out on all people, not the chosen Jews

only. In this community, the differences of ***gender*** would become irrelevant since both men and women now had access to one of the highest forms of ministry (that of prophecy). Also, the differences of ***rank*** would become irrelevant since both young men and elderly patriarchs could receive revelation. And finally, the differences of ***class*** would become irrelevant since servants (both male and female servants) were receiving the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had finally given rise to a community of oneness as there never had been before. As a sign of the new reality of the presence of the Spirit, gender *inequality* is over; the *patriarchal era* is over; and *social inequality* is over.

4. What is the significance of the Pentecost event? (Monday's lesson) Jesus referred to the coming of the Spirit as the "*baptism* with the Holy Spirit," thus using the same descriptive *term* that had been coined by John the Baptist (Mark 1:8), who had adapted the imagery from Joel's prediction of the Spirit's outpouring (Joel 2:28-29). Jesus declared to the disciples that the baptism of the Holy Spirit would be a specific *event* in time. He also gave them an indication of the *place* where it would happen: in Jerusalem—the same place where the great redemptive events of his crucifixion and resurrection had already taken place.

5. Further, Jesus gave them an indication of the *time* when it would happen: in a few days, during which the disciples were to wait without leaving Jerusalem. Finally, Jesus promised that they would *all* receive the Holy Spirit. It would not be a selective experience that would affect some and leave others out. In this connection, it must be noted that the expression "baptism of the Holy Spirit" (or its equivalents "baptism by," "baptism in," or "baptism with the Holy Spirit") is always used in Scripture to designate the **one corporate event of the Day of Pentecost**. It is never applied in the Bible to individual, subjective experiences with the Holy Spirit.

6. Obviously, this momentous event required explanation. It was Peter who spoke on behalf of the new community (Acts 2:14-40). His analysis of what had just happened was clear and bold. He solemnly declared, "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel." And to show the finality of this new form of community, Peter also quoted Joel's perspective on the closing day of history, the Day of the Lord (vv. 19-21). Pentecost marked the beginning of the last phase of history, the age of the church, the "last days". What began at Pentecost would endure until the end when the current universe would disintegrate and the ultimate, completed Day of the Lord would finally usher salvation into God's eternity.

7. What is the purpose of the gifts of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:11-14; Tuesday's lesson)? Why would God add more diversity to an already so diverse humanity? How is the end-time remnant identified in Revelation (12:17; 19:10, 22:9; Wednesday lesson)?

8. What is the end-time outpouring of the Holy Spirit all about (Thursday's lesson)? How does the Palestinian agricultural metaphor of the early and latter rain help (and obscure) what is going on? "As the 'former rain' was given 'to cause the upspringing of the precious seed', so the 'latter rain' will be given at its close for the ripening of the harvest." (GC 611). "In other words, modern manifestations of the prophetic

gift—the latter rain—will look a lot like previous manifestations of the former rain at Pentecost." (Thursday's lesson)

9. If, according to Ephesians 4:11-15, it is all about mission (Friday's lesson), what is it that can we expect and need to participate in during the closing scenes of earth's history? Why is ministry in the New Testament based on spiritual gifts and why are they all needed?

10. God's end-time people need more than information, they need interpretation. They need to know how to read history, power, worship, suffering, compromise, and mission in light of the Christ event. This is why Revelation is addressed not only to John, but to the seven [=all] churches. The prophetic voice becomes a prophetic community. God reveals enough so His people can understand the nature of the conflict and the character of His kingdom.

11. But now His revelation is climactic because it is centered on Jesus Christ. In Revelation, God calls John — and through him a prophetic community — not merely to predict the end, but to unveil Jesus' character, interpret the final conflict, and form a community of people who live now as transparent witnesses to the character of God's coming kingdom.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

About a century and a half ago there arose, in various parts of the world, the growing conviction that the coming of Christ was very near. You know the history about how Bible students in many different churches began to see in certain remarkable events the fulfillment of some of the signs that Jesus had given to His disciples in Matthew 24, next on our sheet. Matthew 24:29: "The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky. . . ." (NIV)

They saw in the darkening of the sun on May 19, 1780, and in the remarkable falling of the stars on November 13, 1833, combined with their study of certain other lines of prophecy in Daniel and Revelation, lines that pointed to the dates 1798 and 1844 as being the dates of certain important events. They saw in all these things an accumulation of evidence, signs, and indications that the long-looked-for advent was very near. We do know that it is a historical fact that the great second-advent movement began at that time. Though some are now puzzled about the signs and the dates, it is an incontrovertible fact of history that that was when the great second-advent movement did begin. The time when it began is the time when all those remarkable signs and prophetic periods seemed to come together. It is not just one date, one event, one piece of evidence. It's all that evidence combined. That's the way God has always sought to convince us throughout the history of the conflict. Not to have a little here and a little there, but an accumulation of evidence.

Some of those eager "adventists" were led by their study of the times and the evidences to begin giving special attention to the messages of the three angels in Revelation 14. They came to the conclusion that the time had arrived for these three messages of warning and invitation to be given to the whole world. A very bold venture they undertook, and the excitement and the disappointment of those days is all part of religious history. There are still thousands, even millions of Christians the world around who agree that those early adventists had indeed seen God's signal that the second coming was near. They didn't read it correctly at first. It was not a signal to pack for the trip up to heaven. It was rather a call from God to prepare the whole world for His coming. That's why we are still here, because we haven't done it yet. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #19, "How Soon Will the Conflict be Over?" recorded June 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/19MMCAG

Naturally, those who remain loyal to God are the special target of Satan's final effort to deceive. Revelation 12, the chapter that first mentions the war in heaven, describes these people—the loyal ones, as being the special objects of Satan's wrath. He goes to make war on these that are called the Remnant, the ones left over, the few. Notice Revelation 12:17, These people who are the object of his special wrath are: "All those who obey God's commandments and are faithful to the truth revealed by Jesus" (GNT). They do not accept Satan's lies.

If we count ourselves among God's loyal people, knowing that we will be the special object of his effort to deceive, we would do well to notice Satan's successes through the centuries in deceiving—especially saints. He doesn't tempt saints into the more usual gross indulgences, the things that saints would never think of doing. Rather we need to notice the insidious methods he has used to turn even saints and angels against our heavenly Father, even while they professed to be God's chosen people. You recall his success among the brilliant angels in heaven. How could he possibly deceive them right in the very presence of the Father? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #17, "Satan's Final Effort to Deceive" recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/17MMCAG

When God gives Satan a free hand to do with the people on this planet as he wishes, that is when all hell breaks loose. And there will be a few who will not be deceived. But according to Revelation 13 how many will worship the adversary? The whole world, it says, and then it says except the few otherwise known as "the remnant". One of the most important things I would think, to the audience there, would be the description of the loyal ones who would enjoy the

benefits of the last two chapters when everything is recreated. Wouldn't those key texts we have learned over the years ring in their ears too?

The remnant are those who keep the commandments of God and bear witness to Jesus or accept His testimony as true. They would remember that. Then they would remember Revelation 14:12, "The saints are those who keep the commandments of God." That's always mentioned and they would know that meant to love God and to love their neighbors as themselves. And it says, "and they have faith in Jesus"; they are loyal to Him, or they have faith in God such as Jesus did. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Revelation, recorded August 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

http://pkp.cc/79MMPOGIA66 (Part 1) http://pkp.cc/80MMPOGIA66 (Part 2)

Lou: And we could be among those if we understand the truth. Here in Revelation 12:17 it speaks of those who "have the testimony of Jesus." The phrase is a bit different in this translation. I remember that phrase from years back. What is this "testimony of Jesus" that the saints will have?

Graham: It can be translated, "They bear witness to Him," in some versions. But take it either way. These are people who hold fast to Jesus's testimony about His Father as true. In other words, they believe what Jesus said about His Father as true. They accept His testimony. Or, if they bear witness to Jesus, that means they do bear witness. They believe in Him, and it's their privilege and pleasure to go and bear witness to Him, the One who brought the truth. So, either way, not to get into the technicalities of the Greek. It's fifty-fifty either way. Whichever way you take it, it makes sense. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #17 with Lou Venden, "Satan's Final Effort to Deceive" recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/17MMCAG

Could I ask you, do you, do we, really accept Jesus' picture of the Father? Do we really accept the testimony of Jesus about His Father? Let's be really specific. Take John 16:26, a statement about His Father that Jesus said has no symbols in it. It is not figures of speech. It is not parables. He said, "The time has come for me to tell you plainly and clearly about My Father." You know the words that followed. We've had them on our sheets at least twice. "There is no need for Me to pray the Father for you. For the Father Himself loves you." Do you accept that? Do you so accept it that it's an integral part of your whole theology and understanding of the plan of salvation? Or are you still unable to accept what Jesus described as a plain clear

statement of the truth about His Father? There is no need for the Son to plead with the Father in our behalf, because the Father loves us just as much as the Son.

Let's recall other things that He said. The Spirit brings these back to our remembrance. John 12, John 14: "If you see Me, you've seen the Father." "If you know Me, you know the Father." All right. Do we believe that the Father is just as gracious as the Son? Is that an integral part of our Christian theology? Did anyone need to reconcile Christ Jesus to us as sinners? Did anything need to be done to assuage and appease the wrath of gentle Jesus and win Him to our side? Then, if we believe His testimony about the Father, nothing had to be done to reconcile the Father to us either. He loves us just as much as the Son. Are we so settled into this truth about our God that we cannot be moved? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #18, "God Waits for His Children to Grow Up" recorded June 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/18MMCAG

Further Study with Ellen White

In the great closing work we shall meet with perplexities that we know not how to deal with; but let us not forget that the three great powers of heaven are working, that a divine hand is on the wheel, and that God will bring His promises to pass. He will gather from the world a people who will serve Him in righteousness. {8T 254.1}

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the Word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.—PK 499, 500 (c. 1914). {LDE 29.5}

Not one cloud has fallen upon the church that God has not prepared for; not one opposing force has risen to counterwork the work of God but He has foreseen. All has taken place as He has predicted through His prophets. He has not left His church in darkness, forsaken, but has traced in prophetic declarations what would occur, and through His providence, acting in its appointed place in the world's history, He has brought about that which His Holy Spirit inspired the prophets to foretell. All His purposes will be fulfilled and established. His law is linked with His throne, and satanic agencies combined with human agencies cannot destroy it. Truth is inspired and guarded by God; it will live, and will succeed, although it may appear at times to be overshadowed. The gospel of Christ is the law exemplified in character. The deceptions practiced against it, every device for vindicating falsehood, every error forged by satanic agencies, will eventually be eternally broken, and the triumph of truth will be like the appearing

of the sun at noonday. The Sun of Righteousness shall shine forth with healing in His wings, and the whole earth shall be filled with His glory. {2SM 108.2}

The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50. {ChS 251.2}

God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. . . . There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. . . . Christ declared that the divine influence of the Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. {ML 37.4}

The gospel invitation is not to be narrowed down, and presented only to a select few, who, we suppose, will do us honor if they accept it. The message is to be given to all. Wherever hearts are open to receive the truth, Christ is ready to instruct them. He reveals to them the Father, and the worship acceptable to Him who reads the heart. For such He uses no parables. To them, as to the woman at the well, He says, "I that speak unto thee am He." {DA 194.2}

The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer's love and of His saving grace. The men and women who through the long centuries of persecution and trial enjoyed a large measure of the presence of the Spirit in their lives, have stood as signs and wonders in the world. Before angels and men they have revealed the transforming power of redeeming love. {AA 49.2}

God has different ways of working, and He has different workmen to whom He entrusts varied gifts. One worker may be a ready speaker; another a ready writer; another may have the gift of sincere, earnest, fervent prayer; another the gift of singing; another may have special power to explain the word of God with clearness. And each gift is to become a power for God, because He works with the laborer. To one God gives the word of wisdom, to another knowledge, to another faith; but all are to work under the same Head. The diversity of gifts leads to a diversity of operations; but "it is the same God which worketh all in all." [1 Corinthians 12:6.] {GW 483.1}

From the endless variety of plants and flowers, we may learn an important lesson. All blossoms are not the same in form or color. Some possess healing virtues. Some are always fragrant. There are professing Christians who think it their duty to make every Christian like themselves.

This is man's plan, not the plan of God. In the church of God there is room for characters as varied as are the flowers in a garden. In His spiritual garden there are many varieties of flowers.—Letter 95, 1902. {Ev 99.1}

I saw a covering that God was drawing over His people to protect them in the time of trouble; and every soul that was decided on the truth and was pure in heart was to be covered with the covering of the Almighty. {EW 43.2}

Satan assailed Christ with his fiercest and most subtle temptations, but he was repulsed in every conflict. Those battles were fought in our behalf; those victories make it possible for us to conquer. Christ will give strength to all who seek it. No man without his own consent can be overcome by Satan. The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin. He may distress, but he cannot contaminate. He can cause agony, but not defilement. The fact that Christ has conquered should inspire His followers with courage to fight manfully the battle against sin and Satan. {GC 510.3}

We shall meet with opposition of every description, as did the builders of the walls of Jerusalem; but if we watch and pray, and work as they did, God will fight our battles for us, and give us precious victories (RH July 6, 1886). {3BC 1138.2}

The Holy Spirit imparts love, joy, peace, strength, and consolation; it is as a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. The blessing is free to all. {FLB 53.7}

All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through co-operation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence. {DA 827.3}

These scenes are to be repeated, and with greater power. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the former rain, but the latter rain will be more abundant. The Spirit awaits our demand and reception. Christ is again to be revealed in His fulness by the Holy Spirit's power. {COL 121.1}

God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. {8T 19.1}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2026: *The Gift of Prophecy*
Lesson 13 "Blessings From *the* Prophetic Word"

Read for this week's study

1 Corinthians 2:2; John 1:1-5; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Isaiah 40:1-5; John 17:20-23; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13.

Memory Text

"So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, 'Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper'" (2 Chronicles 20:20, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

I. Introduction
II. Prophecy Exalts Christ
III. Prophecy Affirms the Bible
IV. Prophecy Is God's Truth Detector
V. Prophecy Comforts God's People
VI. Prophecy Unites the Body in Christ
VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration
Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. "God has spoken to us through His prophets, both canonical (writings in the Bible) and non-canonical (writing not in the Bible). The evidence given us is more than abundant. The question remaining is: Are we open to receive it?" (Sabbath Afternoon)

2. What does it mean to be "open to receive the prophetic word" in 2026? What did it mean to trust God and "keep our eyes on him" in the story of Jehoshaphat? (2 Chronicles 20:12; cf. vss. 6-9) This story in chapter 20 is not about isolated slogans or a formula for guaranteed success. It is a test case in dependence, discernment, and incomplete transformation. The central actor is not the king, but God speaking through the community (v. 14; cf. 35-37).

3. The lesson lists five important affirmations that most believers can agree with. Considering what we have learned this quarter, how would you expand those

affirmations to include participation, testing, mission and freedom within the cosmic conflict?

4. How do you understand Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 2:2 and Galatians 6:14? (Sunday's lesson) Revelation begins not with the prophet, but with Christ: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants…" (Revelation 1:1) John is important, but he is not the center. The seven churches are important, but they are not the center. Prophecy itself is important, but it is not the center.

5. The gift of prophecy must exalt Christ — not the prophetic instrument. Any ministry that produces fear without Christ, certainty without humility, authority without service, or identity without love has lost its center.

6. What does it mean that the prophecy affirms the Bible (Luke 24:27)? (Monday's lesson) New Testament prophecy functions within a community that already possesses the apostolic witness to Jesus. Therefore, no prophetic claim stands above Scripture, replaces Scripture, or removes the responsibility of the church to read Scripture carefully and communally (1 Corinthians 14:29).

7. The prophetic word is not simply handed down to passive recipients by spiritual gurus or specialists. The whole body gathers around the Word, under the Spirit, listening to one another, testing insights, and seeking the mind of Christ together. The community does not surrender its responsibility of discernment merely because a prophetic claim has been made.

8. What important advice does Paul give Timothy concerning God's Word (2 Timothy 4:1-5)? (Tuesday's lesson) The description of prophecy as God's "truth detector" is helpful, provided we do not reduce this to identifying doctrinal error or exposing other people's mistakes. In the cosmic conflict, the foundational lies are about God Himself. The gift of prophecy is not given to make the church feel superior to the world. It is given so the church can remain truthful before Christ. Therefore, the community must be willing to hear truth, not only about the world, but about itself.

9. What is significant about the message from Isaiah 40:1-5 (cf. Matthew 11:28.29) (Wednesday's lesson)? This is why prophecy can provide comfort: it interprets present suffering in the light of God's promised future. The prophetic ministry comforts the church by enabling it to endure without surrendering either hope or integrity.

10. That is why those who claim to possess the gift of 'straight testimony' are not authenticated by the severity of their criticism, the harshness of their tone, or their ability to expose the failures of others. The truly prophetic voice may confront sin, but it does so in the spirit of the God who says, 'Comfort, comfort my people,' and of Christ who is 'gentle and humble in heart.' Prophetic truth does not crush the weary; it prepares a way through the wilderness, lifts the discouraged, restores trust in God's future, and calls the community back to faithful, hopeful, Christlike living. A testimony that is merely "straight" but not redemptive, compassionate, and Christ-centered is only blunt, but not necessarily prophetic.

11. What core appeal is at the heart of these two passages of Scripture (John 17:20-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:10-13)? (Thursday's lesson) Prophecy does unite the church. But true prophetic unity is not produced by enforcing identical opinions through appeal to spiritual or ecclesiastical authority. It is produced by drawing people together into communion with Christ and therefore into honest, humble, discerning communion with one another. A church cannot call people to the Lamb by using the methods of the beast. We need to see the church not only as a proclaiming messenger, but as an organic participant in divine revelation, where the vulnerable are heard, leaders are accountable and spiritual gifts serve the body rather than elevate individuals.

12. In the New Testament, the Spirit is not confined to kings, priests, male leaders, or professional religious authorities. The eschatological people of God become a Spirit-filled discerning community (Acts 2:17; 1 Corinthians 14:29).

13. The gift of prophecy is not merely something the church *possesses* as an identifying credential. It is part of how the Spirit forms the church into a truthful, discerning, relational, Christ-centered community in the time between the inauguration (the first Advent) and consummation of God's kingdom (the second Advent).

14. Rather than functioning as the possession of a privileged individual(s) or as a badge of institutional superiority, the prophetic gift serves the whole body, enabling God's people to hear together, test together, live faithfully together, and embody before the world the truthful, liberating and self-giving character of the Lamb.

15. The remnant is not the community that has successfully moved beyond the need for prophetic correction. It is the community that remains willing to be searched, corrected, healed and re-formed by the testimony of Jesus. In a cosmic conflict framework, the church's credibility does not come from claiming perfection or spiritual superiority. It comes from remaining open to the transforming truth of God.

16. A prophetic ministry calls the church to repentance before it calls the world to judgment. The prophetic ministry is not given simply to identify the remnant, protect doctrinal boundaries, or prepare people intellectually for coming events. It is more than transmitting information. It is participating in God's movement of truth, healing, liberation, reconciliation and hope.

17. How do we move beyond an overly functional understanding of the church merely as a "herald" or "messenger," and recover the church as a community (*koinonia*) of discerning believers guided by the Holy Spirit? What steps can we take so that the community of believers is not simply a carrier of divine revelation, but an organic participant in how God's truth and Christ-like presence is embodied and interpreted in the world?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

But the most impressive illustration of how God seeks to convince us—not on authority and power, but on the basis of truth—was provided by Jesus Himself on the road to Emmaus. And that's described in Luke 24, on the Bible Reference Sheet. I wish we could read the whole story:

> But while they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him [they didn't know Christ was walking with them]. And he said to them, "What is this conversation which you are holding?" [You see, they were having a conversation about God (as we are) on the road to Emmaus.] And they stood still, looking sad. . . . And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. Later, when he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him. (RSV)

Why did He not reveal who He was at the beginning, and say, "What are your questions? You know that I will give you authoritative answers, and I will expect you to believe them." He did not reveal who He was until He had led them to an intelligent confidence based on the unquestionable evidence of scripture. Then He revealed who He was. If the Infinite One will do that, how dare we presume to take any shortcuts? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4, "God's Way of Restoring Trust" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG

Further Study with Ellen White

It is God's plan to give sufficient evidence of the divine character of His work to convince all who honestly desire to know the truth. But He never removes all opportunity for doubt. All who desire to question and cavil will find occasion. {1SM 72.3}

Satan has ability to suggest doubts and devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue and mark of intelligence in them to be unbelieving and questioning, and quibbling. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and teachable spirit. All should decide from the weight of evidence. {RH, September 16, 1873 par. 10}

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to

be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. {DA 759.1}

It was God's purpose to place things on an eternal basis of security, and in the councils of heaven it was decided that time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his system of government. He had claimed that these were superior to God's principles. Time was given for the working of Satan's principles, that they might be seen by the heavenly universe. {DA 759.2}

The death of Christ upon the cross made sure the destruction of him who has the power of death, who was the originator of sin. When Satan is destroyed, there will be none to tempt to evil; the atonement will never need to be repeated; and there will be no danger of another rebellion in the universe of God. That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels. . . The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. {5BC 1132.8}

The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. {5BC 1132.9}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {6BC 1110.5}

All should be intelligent in regard to the agency by which the soul is destroyed. It is not because of any decree that God has sent out against man. He does not make man spiritually blind. God gives sufficient light and evidence to enable man to distinguish truth from error. But He does not force man to receive truth. He leaves him free to choose the good or to choose the evil. If man resists evidence that is sufficient to guide his judgment in the right direction, and chooses evil once, he will do this more readily the second time. The third time he will still more eagerly withdraw himself from God and choose to stand on the side of Satan. And in this course he will continue until he is confirmed in evil, and believes the lie he has cherished as truth. His resistance has produced its harvest (MS 126, 1901). {6BC 1112.5}

Heaven, looking down and seeing the delusions into which men were led, knew that a divine Instructor must come to the earth. Through the misrepresentations of the enemy, many were so deceived that they worshiped a false god, clothed with the attributes of the satanic character. Those in ignorance and moral darkness must have light, spiritual light; for the world knew not God, and He must be revealed to their understanding. Truth looked down from heaven and saw not the reflection of her image; for dense clouds of spiritual darkness and gloom enveloped the world. The Lord Jesus alone was able to roll back the clouds; for He is the light of the world. By His presence He could dissipate the gloomy shadow that Satan had cast between man and God.—First published Nov. 17, 1891. {CT 28.1}

Christ alone was able to represent the Deity. . . . God Himself must be revealed to humanity. In order to do this, our Saviour clothed His divinity with humanity. He employed the human faculties, for only by adopting these could He be comprehended by humanity. Only humanity could reach humanity. He lived out the character of God through the human body which God had prepared for Him. {TMK 25.3}

Had Christ come in His divine form, humanity could not have endured the sight. The contrast would have been too painful, the glory too overwhelming. Humanity could not have endured the presence of one of the pure, bright angels from glory; therefore Christ took not on Him the nature of angels; He came in the likeness of men. {TMK 25.4}

Christ could not have come to this earth with the glory that He had in the heavenly courts. Sinful human beings could not have borne the sight. He veiled His divinity with the garb of humanity, but He did not part with His divinity. A divine-human Saviour, He came to stand at the head of the fallen race, to share in their experience from childhood to manhood (RH June 15, 1905). {5BC 1128.2}

For our sake Jesus emptied Himself of His glory; He clothed His divinity with humanity that He might touch humanity, that His personal presence might be among us, that we might know that He was acquainted with all our trials, and sympathized with our grief, that every son and daughter of Adam might understand that Jesus is the friend of sinners (ST April 18, 1892). {7BC 927.1}

Since God is infinite, and in Him are all the treasures of wisdom, we may to all eternity be ever searching, ever learning, yet never exhaust the riches of His wisdom, His goodness, or His power. {Ed 172.2}

The Bible is its own interpreter. With beautiful simplicity one portion connects itself with the truth of another portion, until the whole Bible is blended in one harmonious whole. Light flashes forth from one text to illuminate some portion of the Word that has seemed more obscure. {OHC 207.5}

He maintained his disguise till he had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to an intelligent faith in his life, his character, his mission to earth, and his death and resurrection. He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, not because it was supported by his personal testimony, but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of his life and death, presented unquestionable evidence of that truth. When the object of his labors with the two disciples was gained, he revealed himself to them that their joy might be full, and then vanished from their sight. {6Red 32.3}

Had the Saviour first made Himself known to the disciples, they would have been satisfied. In the fullness of their joy they would have desired nothing more. But it was necessary for them to understand how His mission had been foretold by all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament. Upon these their faith must be established. Christ performed no miracle to convince them, but it was His first work to explain the Scriptures. They had looked upon His death as the destruction of all their hopes. Now He showed from the prophets that this was the very strongest evidence for their faith. {SJ 163.9}

The study of God's word is continually expanding the mind and strengthening the intellect. There is nothing that will so refine and elevate the character, and give vigor to every faculty, as the continual exercise of the mind to grasp and comprehend weighty and important truths. {4T 545.3}

God never leaves the world without men who can discern between good and evil, righteousness and unrighteousness. He has men whom He has appointed to stand in the forefront of the battle in times of emergency. {GW 263.3}

As we near the time when principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places will be brought into warfare against the truth, when the deceiving power of Satan will be so great that if it were possible he will deceive the very elect, we must have our discernment sharpened by divine enlightenment, that we may know the Spirit that is of God, that we may not be ignorant of Satan's devices. {MR311 49.1}

God calls upon His creatures to turn their attention from the confusion and perplexity around them and admire His handiwork. As we study His works, angels from heaven will be by our side to enlighten our minds and guard them from Satan's deceptions. {CT 457.1}

Go to God for yourselves, pray for divine enlightenment, that you may know that you do know what is truth, that when the wonderful miracle-working power of Satan shall be displayed, and the enemy shall come as an angel of light, you may distinguish between the genuine work of God and the imitative work of the powers of darkness. {RH, December 24, 1889 par. 11}

The manifestation of God's love, His mercy and His goodness, and the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart to enlighten and renew it, place us, through faith, in so close connection with

Christ that, having a clear conception of His character, we are able to discern the masterly deceptions of Satan. {5T 744.2}

Our Saviour's words, "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28), are a prescription for the healing of physical, mental, and spiritual ills. Though men have brought suffering upon themselves by their own wrongdoing, He regards them with pity. In Him they may find help. He will do great things for those who trust in Him. {MH 115.4}

Christ is the wellspring of life. . . When the sunlight of God's love illuminates the darkened chambers of the soul, restless weariness and dissatisfaction will cease, and satisfying joys will give vigor to the mind and health and energy to the body. {MH 247.2}

As through Jesus we enter into rest, heaven begins here. We respond to His invitation, Come, learn of Me, and in thus coming we begin the life eternal. Heaven is a ceaseless approaching to God through Christ. The longer we are in the heaven of bliss, the more and still more of glory will be opened to us; and the more we know of God, the more intense will be our happiness. {FLB 367.4}

What is the "rest" promised?—It is the consciousness that God is true, that He never disappoints the one who comes to Him. His pardon is full and free, and His acceptance means rest to the soul, rest in His love. {OHC 97.7}

He proposes to be our friend, to walk with us through all the rough pathways of life. He says to us, I am the Lord thy God; walk with me, and I will fill thy path with light. Jesus, the Majesty of Heaven, proposes to elevate to companionship with Himself those who come to Him with their burdens, their weaknesses, and their cares. . . . {OHC 97.4}

His invitation to us is a call to a pure, holy, and happy life—a life of peace and rest, of liberty and love—and to a rich inheritance in the future, immortal life. . . . It is our privilege to have daily a calm, close, happy walk with Jesus. {OHC 97.5}

When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart. {DA 678.1}

The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. In mind, in purpose, in character, they are one, but not in person. By partaking of the Spirit of God, conforming to the law of God, man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ brings His disciples into a living union with Himself and with the Father. Through the working of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind, man is made complete in Christ Jesus. Unity with Christ

establishes a bond of unity with one another. This unity is the most convincing proof to the world of the majesty and virtue of Christ, and of His power to take away sin. {SD 286.3}

Christ brings all true believers into complete oneness with Himself, even the oneness which exists between Him and His Father. The true children of God are bound up with one another and with their Saviour. They are one with Christ in God. {SD 293.5}