TALKING POINTS

The Gift of Prophecy
Quarter 4, Lesson 9
"Testing the Prophets"

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MEMORY VERSE: "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 STUDY INTRO

This lesson examines the biblical tests of a genuine prophet.

1. Prophets bear supernatural evidence (Sun, Thu)

- Physical phenomena (Sun)
    - God communicates to the prophet (Num. 12:6; Dan. 10:4-7; see also Jn. 12:27-30).
    - This communication is often accompanied by supernatural physical phenomena (Dan. 10:15-19).
        - "God uses physical phenomena to draw attention to a prophet so that the prophetic message can be noted." Qtly, Sun, par 3
- Future events (Thu)
    - Only God knows the future, so only God's true prophets can foretell the future accurately (Jer. 28:9; Jn. 14:29).
    - God often makes future events dependent on our response to His warning (Jer. 18:7-10; Jonah 3:1-4:3).
- Satan and his angels also have supernatural abilities – as far as God allows – so *such evidence* is not sufficient to *test* a prophet (see Dt. 13:1-5; Ex. 7:8-13; Rev. 13:11-14; Mt. 24:24, 25; Qtly, Sun, par 4).

2. True prophets uplift the Word of God (Mon, Tue)

- True prophets never contradict but instead amplify, clarify, and apply the written Word of God (Is. 8:20).
    - God reveals not merely a message but makes Himself known to the prophet (Num. 12:6); since God is self-consistent, a true prophet's message will always harmonize with God's Word (see Qtly, Mon, par 3, 5).
- True prophets always point to Scripture as basis of belief, not merely their own prophetic authority. (2 Pet. 1:16-21; Rom. 15:4; Lk. 24:13-49).

- Since all Scripture testifies of Jesus (Jn. 5:39), all true prophets ultimately uplift Christ, the Living Word (1 Jn. 4:1-3; 2 Pet. 1:19).
    - "True prophets must believe that Jesus was God incarnate yet truly a human being. They must also embrace the complete truth about Jesus—His mission, sinless life, atoning death, resurrection, and high-priestly ministry in heaven, as well as His second coming. This is more than an intellectual agreement that Jesus lived on earth. Jesus must be the center of a prophet's teachings and not just something added on. His or her messages should lead people to a saving relationship with Jesus." Qtly, Tue, par 3

3. Prophets are known by the fruit of their ministry (Wed, Fri)

- True prophets are still human beings, beset by fallen natures and defects of character (Jonah 1:1-3; Ac. 15:36-39; Gal. 2:11-4).
    - "No prophet completely models the example of Jesus, but a true prophet is committed to the principles and lifestyle of God's kingdom. Anyone who claims to be God's messenger and yet whose lifestyle blatantly contradicts the message he or she carries should be regarded with suspicion." Qtly, Wed, par 4
- Despite their personal shortcomings, the *work* of prophets, both **true** and **false**, will *always* bear fruit (Mt. 7:15-20).
    - "The quality of a fruit can be judged only over a period of time. By seeing a prophet's character and watching what results come from his or her messages, we can see whether that prophet is drawing others to God or leading them away from Him." Qtly, Wed, par 2
- Ellen G. White's ministry gave evidence of all we've covered in this lesson: supernatural phenomena, uplifting Christ and His Word, and finally the fruit of souls won to Christ (see Qtly, Fri).

CONCLUSION

"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." Qtly, Sab, par 3