

Test Questions – Lesson 20

1. Fill in the blanks here:

1. In the days of, King of Israel, and King of Judah, and attempt was made to influence, the prophet of God.

2. The prophet’s response was: “As the Lords liveth even that, that will I speak.”

2. Complete the quotation from Mrs. Whites:

“You think individuals have My mind. If I am in this, I am to be entrusted with the of God.”

3. Underline the correct words in parentheses:

Mrs. White was careful (to read) (not to read) current publications on health before writing out the "health form" vision given to her on June 6, 1863.

4. Answer these questions:

1. What leading worker around the turn of the century emphatically stated his conviction that Mrs. White was not and could not be “influenced,” then ten years later wrote a 70-page letter attempting to do that very thing?

2. Was the attempt successful?

5. Underline the correct words in parentheses:

1. Mrs. White (admitted) (denied) the charge that “someone manipulates her writings.”

2. Someone identified this as (A. G. Danielles) (“One who is mighty in counsel”).

6. Answer these questions:

1. In the San Francisco crisis, what effect did Mrs. White’s letter have –

a. On the erring brothers?

b. On Elder Loughborough?

c. One the members of the San Francisco church?

2. Could anyone but God have given to so many people just the help each needed at exactly the right time?

THINK ON THESE THINGS (No written answer)



Supply the information called for:

1. List three clauses in Philippians 1:27, 28 that especially applied to the Battle Creek Tabernacle crisis.

a.

b.

c.

2. Give one reason why a letter written by Mrs. White 30 days before the meeting concerning Anne Rice Phillips, arrived the next morning after the meeting.

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If circumstances require, will God in our day intervene in the conduct of His work?

Are the greatest providence in connection with the Advent Movement ahead of us or behind us?

Have there been providential interventions in your life? Did you recognize them as such, at the time?

Has the study of this lesson strengthened your faith? How? Why? These lessons are being supplied to you without charge by the Voice of Prophecy. Your help is solicited in continuing circulation of this course among Seventh-day Adventist.

Integrity and Timeliness of Prophetic Messages

20



PROPHETIC GUIDANCE

GUIDING TEXT: What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the churches. - Revelation 1:11.

INTRODUCTION

Confidence in the prophets' witness is substantiated by indisputable and abundant evidences of the integrity and divine timing of the messages. There were times when the integrity of Bible prophets was called in question, as when Jeremiah delivered to the leaders of Judah a warning message God had given him, and one of the princes arose and accused him of being influenced by his secretary: "Thou speakest falsely: the Lord our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there: but Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us." Jeremiah 43:2, 3. The important question is, Were the prophets of God - including Ellen White - influenced by circumstances or persons about them? Could they be influenced?

Bible Example of an Attempt to Influence a Prophet of God

In the days of Ahab and Jehoshaphat an attempt was made to influence the prophet, as recorded in 2 Chronicles 18. Judah's good King Jehoshaphat, apparently attended by his army, visited Israel's King Ahab at Samaria. When Ahab invited Jehosbaphat to join him in a military expedition against Ramoth-gilead, Jehoshaphat readily responded, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war. " Verse 3.

Then thinking better of his hasty assent to Ahab's proposal, he suggested, "Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord today," And Ahab called four hundred "prophets" who, eager to please their master, urged: "Go up; for God will deliver it into the king's hand." But Jehoshaphat, fully aware of the character of these men, asked Ahab: "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord beside, that we might enquire of him?"

To this Ahab replied: "There is yet one man, by whom we may enquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil: the same is Micaiah the son of ImIah." Nevertheless, seeing that Jehoshaphat would not be satisfied until they had heard from Micaiah, Ahab dispatched an officer to call the prophet to come and prophesy regarding the proposed expedition.

The officer, knowing well the character and temper of his chief, decided to do the prophet a kindness and possibly save his life, by suggesting to Micaiah the kind of message it would be well to give. He said, "Behold, the words of the prophets declare good to the king with one assent; let thy word therefore, . . . be like one of their's, and speak thou good."

Micaiah's answer was spontaneous and without apology: "As the Lord liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak." Regardless of the outcome, Micaiah could give only the message of God. He could not be influenced.

At the king's court Micaiah unhesitatingly predicted disaster to the enterprise. Whereupon Ahab turned to Jehoshaphat and angrily exclaimed: "Did not I tell thee that he would not prophesy good unto me, but evil?"

Then King Ahab consigned the prophet Micaiah to the dungeon, on a diet of bread and water, until he should return in victory. But Ahab did not return!

Mrs. White's Statements Indicate She Was Not Influenced

Through the years Mrs. White was surrounded by strong men, many of them close to the heart of the work of the church. It is but natural that the question might arise in the minds of some as to whether Mrs. White might have been influenced by those about her in the messages she bore. From her own statements we gain a view of just how imminent was such a peril.

When one earnest man read what Mrs. White had written in 1893 regarding a certain experience in our denominational work, he felt that she had been misinformed. He wrote to her, pointing out that she had not received correct information on these points, and attempting to set her straight. Two sentences from her reply are significant: "You think individuals have prejudiced my mind. If I am in this state, I am not fitted to be entrusted with the work of God." - *Selected Messages*, Book II, p. 63.

Writing many years earlier to a sister who felt that the testimony borne by Mrs. White had been based upon report; she had taken to Mrs. White, the Lord's messenger said:

What if you had said ever so much, would that affect the visions that God gives me? If so, then the visions are nothing. . . . What you or anyone else has said is nothing at all. God has taken the matter in hand. . . . What you have said, Sister --, influenced me not at all. *My opinion* has nothing to do with what God has shown me in vision. - *E. G. White letter 6, 1851*. Quoted in *Messenger*, p. 16. Italics supplied.

Mrs. White's .Messages Not Influenced by Things She Read

Mrs. White guarded carefully the possible relationship of what she might read to what she was writing. To illustrate: The comprehensive health reform vision was given to Mrs. White in June of 1863. In many points it was quite "out of line with the commonly accepted understanding of that day. As she related the view, some spoke of the similarity of some features to the teachings of certain hygienists of the time. When inquiry was made on this point, Mrs. White wrote thus:

As I introduced the subject of health to friends, and spoke against drugs and flesh meats, and in favor of water, pure air, and a proper diet, the reply was often made, "You speak very nearly the same opinions taught in the *Laws of Life*, and other publications, by Doctors Trail, Jackson, and others. Have you read that paper and those works?" My reply was that I had not, neither should I read them till I had fully written out my views, lest it should be said that I had received my light upon the subject of health from physicians, and not from the Lord. - *The Review and Herald*, October 8, 1867, p. 260.

In referring to her first published presentations on the subject of health, she declared:

I did not read any works upon health until I had written *Spiritual Gifts*, Vols. iii and iv, *Appeal to Mothers*, and had sketched out most of my six articles in the six numbers of *How to Live*. - *Ibid*.

In the same year she asserted, “My views were written independent of books or the opinions of others.” - *Ellen White Ms. 7*, 1867. Quoted in *Messenger*, p.16.

Of course there were times in Ellen White's experience when reports that came to her indicated the need of presenting certain counsels. Paul wrote counsel and instruction to the churches when reports coming to him indicated that it was needful. Such reports did *not originate* the message, but only *called forth a message based on revelations previously given*. It will be worth your while to read Mrs. White's interesting comment on this, in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 65, 66.

Outcome of an Attempt to Influence Mrs. White

Soon after Mrs. White reached Europe, in the late summer of 1885, as she traveled among the churches in the northern countries and presented her messages meeting squarely the needs of the people, one of our leading ministers felt that Mrs. White could benefit by some guidance in the matters she should present. Her reaction to this attempt to influence her message is revealed in an entry she made in her journal:

Brother --- suggests that it would please the people if I speak less about duty and more in regard to the love of Jesus. But I wish to speak as the Spirit of the Lord shall impress me. The Lord knows best what this people needs. I spoke in the forenoon [Sabbath, October 17, 1885] from Isa. 58. I did not round the corners at all. . . My work is to elevate the standard of piety and true Christian life, and urge the people to put away their sins and be sanctified through the truth. - *Ms. 26, 1885*, p. 5.

Relative to the source of Mrs. White's information and the suggestion that she may have been influenced, an earnest worker of earlier years, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, then medical superintendent of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, wrote to Mrs. White of his observations:

There are so many who are ready to say that Sister White has been influenced to do or to say this or that, I often hesitate about writing you concerning things which I would like to write to you about, so that in case remarks of that sort are made, I can say with the utmost confidence that there had been no possible opportunity for you to be influenced, by me at any rate. It has been to me a source of more confidence and satisfaction than I can express to you, that I have often seen, in my acquaintance with you and your work, wrongs set right through the special leading of your mind by the Lord.

I used often to make a test in my mind, saying nothing to anybody. I would say to myself, Now here is an evident wrong. Sister White knows nothing about it, or if she knows anything about it, the circumstances are such as would produce a personal prejudice in favor of the wrong rather than against it. If the Lord leads her to denounce and correct this evil, I shall know that she is being specially led. In not a single instance did the test fail, and so my confidence grew. I mention these facts very often to those whom I find doubting. - Letter to Mrs. E. G. White, Sept. 9, 1892. Quoted in *Messenger*, pp. 16, 17.

To Doctor Kellogg the evidence of his observations was conclusive. As he saw it, no one had influenced Mrs. White. She did not receive from human sources the information she set forth in her writings.

It may seem strange that just ten years after writing the above letter (having changed his attitude toward some teachings of the church and toward the Spirit of Prophecy), this same Doctor Kellogg deliberately attempted to influence Mrs. White. Here is the story as told by Elder A. G. Daniells, and well supported by many documents in the White Publications file.

In 1902, early in Elder Daniells' administration as President of the General Conference, a general council was held in Europe to plan for advancement of the work of the denomination in many countries. Doctor Kellogg was there to assist in the conference and to lead out in securing property for a sanitarium in England. Several sites were examined, but though at the time the brethren were unable to secure property suitable for sanitarium work, Doctor Kellogg urged blanket approval of a plan to move forward, even though there were neither buildings nor money in sight for the work. Aware that, because of previous unsound financial policies, the General Conference was practically bankrupt and the medical association overwhelmingly in debt, Elder Daniells consented to move forward only as money was in hand or in sight. Doctor Kellogg, impatient and insistent that they must not delay, declared that Elder Daniells would be made to understand.

In due time after returning to Battle Creek, Doctor Kellogg dictated a 70-page letter to Ellen White, placing matters before her in the strongest possible light, and using every argument he could summon to influence her against the General Conference Committee and Elder Daniells, and in favor of the sanitarium enterprise in England.

Word that such a letter had been written, together with the main points embodied in it, was passed by the secretary who transcribed it to others who informed Elder Daniells. Aroused at the seeming injustice, Elder Daniells sat down that evening in the quiet of his home, saying to himself, "I must give Mrs. White my side of the story:" Painstakingly he wrote two pages, and was on the third when he caught himself.

"What am I doing?" he asked himself. "If Mrs. White is God's messenger, I need not write a word to her. She knows the whole story in its correct setting. Why should I endeavor to inform her?" And tearing the sheets to bits, he threw them into the wastebasket. But still he wondered. What would be Mrs. White's attitude toward him when they should meet a few weeks hence at the General Conference Session in Oakland, California? Would she be influenced by the strong arguments and misrepresentations of Doctor Kellogg's 70-page letter? Or would her attitude indicate a true perception of the situation?

As Elder Daniells met Mrs. White just before the General Conference Session opened, she grasped his hand in a cordial and firm handshake, and declared that the work was in a crisis. She made it clear that she well understood the whole situation. Then Elder Daniells knew that Mrs. White had not been influenced one whit by the long communication sent to her by Doctor Kellogg. The positions she took in the Conference Session confirmed this assurance.

Basis for Confidence in the Integrity of Mrs. White's Messages

Those who were close to Mrs. White refrained from conveying information to her concerning problems in the cause of God, lest it might be said that someone had told Mrs. White and she had then written a testimony. From time to time some have thought that perhaps some of the things Mrs. White set forth as messages from the Lord had originated in her own mind. This Mrs. White disclaimed, and asked:

What reserve power has the Lord with which to reach those who have cast aside His warnings and reproofs, and have accredited the testimonies of the Spirit of God to no higher source than human wisdom? - *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 466.

Many years ago Mrs. White wrote in a letter of how some individuals found fault with messages she had addressed to them, saying that part of the communication was the Lord's, part her own. Then she stated:

If God reproves His people through an individual, He does not leave the one corrected to guess at matters, and the message to become corrupted in reaching the person it is designed to correct. God gives the message and then takes especial care that it is not corrupted. - *E. G. White Letter 8, 1860*, p. 21.

Mrs. White did admit, however, that there was an influence which had a bearing on her messages:

There are those who say, "Someone manipulates her writings." I acknowledge the charge. It is One who is mighty in counsel, One who presents before me the condition of things. - *E. G. White Letter, 1906*. Quoted in *Messenger*, p. 17.

Yes, Mrs. White acknowledged that someone influenced her - Someone "has told me." It was One mighty in counsel; not one of her brethren, but the Lord!

Experience Illustrates Timeliness of Prophetic Messages

One convincing evidence that the Lord spoke through His servant, Ellen White, is the timing of the messages. Again and again messages came from her pen to meet an issue or a crisis, and were received at just the right time. Her first vision met on time the practical needs of the Advent people in the disappointment of 1844, and answered the questions uppermost in their minds - had God led them? and was He still leading them?

A letter from Mrs. 'White saved the day in a crisis in San Francisco, California. A worker who had been assisting J. N. Loughborough in a series of tent meetings, brought disrepute upon the cause by his indiscreet conduct. Elder Loughborough wrote of the perplexities caused by his fellow laborer:

An associate laborer persisted in a course of action which I was confident would subject himself and the cause to reproach ... I did not claim that the brother had committed actual sin in his course of action, but I reasoned that our enemies would make capital of what he claimed to be innocent. He took the position that he had a right to "do as he pleased" in the matter Thus matters stood on Sabbath, January 27 [1872], when it was decided that there must be an investigation of the case, and some decisive action taken by the church, to save them from the stigma that this defiant spirit was likely to produce . A meeting was appointed, to begin Sunday, January 28, at 9 A.M., in reference to the same. To all appearances a division of that church was inevitable. I spent much of that night in prayer to God,that he would work in our behalf. - *Great Second Advent Movement*, pp. 386, 387.

Elder Loughborough's prayers were answered.

On the morning of the 28th, as I started for the meeting, I met the fellow-laborer on the sidewalk, near my boarding place, weeping. Said he, "Brother Loughborough, I am not going to the meeting to-day." "Not going to the meeting?" said I; "the meeting relates to your case “What has occasioned this great change in you since yesterday?" I inquired. He replied, "I went to the post-office last night, after the Sabbath, and received a letter from Sister White, from Battle Creek, Mich. It is a testimony she has written out for me." Handing it to me, he said, "Read that, and you will see how the Lord sees my case."

He requested me to say to the church that he had received a testimony from Sister White, re-proving him for his conduct, and that he accepted it, as it was the truth. - *Ibid.*, pp. 387, 388.

To understand the background of that letter from Sister White is to discern the guiding hand of God. Keep in mind the date of the meeting at which this brother's case was to be decided - January 28, 1872. But Mrs. White's letter was mailed from Battle Creek on January 18, when she knew nothing of the plans for a church trial. Elder Loughborough explained that the letter the erring brother received was part of a view given to Mrs. White at Bordoville, Vermont, on December 10, 1871.

She began to write the part relating to this brother's case Dec. 27, 1871, but for some reason the completion of the document was delayed until Jan. 18, 1872, at which time it was finished and mailed from Battle Creek. It then required about nine days to get letters overland from Michigan to California At the time of the vision there was but a shadow of what was actually developed when the testimony arrived in San Francisco. It will be seen, from a comparison of dates, that the culmination of the case in San Francisco came after the written testimony left the former place. Our brethren in San Francisco saw at once that no person could have written to Battle Creek and communicated the intelligence to Mrs. White in time for her to write this letter, for the state of things did not then exist ...

At a very early hour all the morning of Jan. 18, 1872, Mrs. White was awakened with the above testimony vividly impressed upon her mind. The impression was as distinct to her as though audibly spoken, "Write out immediately that testimony for California and get it into the very next mail; it is needed." This being repeated the second time, she arose, hastily dressed, and completed the writing. Just before breakfast she handed it to her son Willie, saying, "Take this letter to the post-office, but don't put it into the drop. Hand it to the post-master, and have him be sure to put it into the mail bag that goes out this morning." He afterward said that he thought her instructions a little peculiar, but he asked no questions, and did as he was bidden, and "saw the letter go into the mail bag." - *Ibid.*, p. 388, 389.

If that letter had reached San Francisco a day later, the church might have been split, for this brother had many sympathizers. But it arrived just in time! Elder Loughborough continued:

Here was a testimony which bore evident marks of the Lord's hand, not only in that it arrived at a proper time to effectually correct the existing errors, but, being humbly accepted and acted upon by the brother, it exerted a mighty influence to bring unity and stability into that young church. - *Ibid.*, p. 390.

Mrs. White declared:

... I have been aroused from my sleep with a vivid sense of subjects previously presented to my mind; and I have written, at midnight, letters that have gone across the continent and, arriving at a crisis, have saved great disaster to the cause of God. - *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 671.

Lesson 21, entitled, "Spirit of Prophecy Leads to Balanced Christian Life," will show how the Spirit of Prophecy has helped to shape lives in harmony with the Pattern. It will also show how Satan works through extremists and fanatics to bring confusion and reproach.