

God's True Church (Part 2)

This morning we're going to continue on with the subject we discussed last time that dealt with God's true church. If you recall, we talked about how to identify God's last day church, and there were a couple main characteristics we discovered that pinpoint the time frame this church would arrive on the scene and how it would be different than the run of the mill churches.

According to **Revelation 12:17** the apostle John said that the dragon, or Satan, would be angry with the woman and the remnant of her seed, representing God's last day church. And why would he be angry? Because they keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. And according to the 1260-year time prophecy mentioned in **verses 6 and 14** of this same chapter, this remnant would develop sometime shortly after the close of the prophecy in 1798. We discussed this last time, and if you didn't hear last month's CD, let me know and I'll send you a copy.

Now, we understand that keeping the commandments of God means obedience to all 10, and not just 8 or 9! God didn't give us 10 suggestions to pick and choose from. As Christians we understand and believe that God has the right to exercise supreme authority over those who have accepted the sacrifice of Christ in their behalf, and when He tells us to do something, we know He has our best interest in view, because He died for us; so why wouldn't we do what He asks? Out of love God commands us, and out of love we respond by doing what He says. In **John 14:15** Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments." And so, it's a love thing all the way around.

But what else did John say the remnant church would have? "The testimony of Jesus", and we found out last time that the testimony of Jesus, according to **Revelation 19:10**, is "the spirit of prophecy", or the prophetic gift. This means that someone within this commandment-keeping remnant church, sometime after 1798, would receive revelations from God in the same way the Bible prophets did. And so, this really narrows down our search for God's true church in these last days, doesn't it? But what church could this be? And who is this person that received this gift? Well, if you've looked into these questions, you already know that there's been more than one church since 1798 that has claimed that this special gift has been manifest within their midst; but how can we know which one is the right one? Is it the Mormon Church with Joseph Smith? Is it Jehovah's Witnesses with Charles Taze Russell? Or could it be Christian Scientists with Mary Baker Eddy? You can get on the Internet and search for prophets and prophetess and you will find no lack of people who claim this gift, but who could it be? We'll get to that in due course.

But now that I have given you a brief recap of what we studied last time and an overview of what we'll be discussing today, I'd like to go back to the beginning when the whole sin problem began.

In the beginning God made Adam and Eve because He desired the companionship of beings who were created in His own image, and it all began with a perfect world and two perfect people. And by the way, this plan is going to succeed in the end, and I hope you'll be a part of it.

There in their Garden home, God came and walked and talked with these two newlyweds face to face. This is the way God originally planned it—absolutely nothing to keep them apart; nothing that would destroy the closeness and the oneness that existed between the Creator and the creatures He made. But sad to say, this face-to-face relationship lasted for only two chapters in the Bible, with 1187 to follow. Genesis, chapter 3 tells the whole tragic story.

After Adam and Eve sinned they were evicted from their beautiful garden home because God and sin are incompatible. Because they disobeyed, they could no longer have direct communication and fellowship with God, and unfortunately, just as sin separated Adam and Eve from God, so it continues to cause separation today. Notice what it says in **Genesis 3:8-10**. [Prayer]

“And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

Adam and Eve were hiding because they didn't want to face God. Really, they just wanted to get lost. Because that's what sin does. It separates and shatters relationships between God and man and even causes division among those who profess to be God's people. Look at what God says in **Isaiah 59:1, 2**. “Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.” So without Jesus, this is the lot of man.

But we can be thankful this morning that even though sin physically separates us from God, it doesn't separate us from His love. Because **Romans 5:8** says, “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” And because of this love, God found another way of keeping in touch with sinful people. He chose men and women He could trust to be His mouthpiece so He could continue to communicate with mankind. Among those He chose were people like Moses, Miriam, Samuel, Elijah, Huldah, Deborah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many others. Prophets and prophetesses as spokespeople for God!

And when you think about it, this was God's way of saying, I love you, I care about you, and I want to have a relationship with you because I have a plan for your life.

The Bible records many conversations between God and different Bible characters, but it wasn't exactly the same as the conversations and fellowship that Adam and Eve enjoyed in the Garden of Eden. There were a few during Old Testament times who had a very close encounter with God; like Moses, and Abraham, and Elijah. And in New Testament times there were Christ's disciples and the apostle Paul; but still, it wasn't like what Adam and Eve enjoyed. Most of the time God spoke through the Holy Spirit, and sometimes holy angels communicated God's messages, but these agencies always worked through people God chose to be His messengers.

During the first couple thousand years before the flood, there was no written revelation from God so far as we know. Those who were taught of God had to communicate by word of mouth what He told them. But sometime after the Flood God chose to speak through prophets and prophetesses, men and women who spoke for God and wrote down what He told them as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Let's read a couple verses, one in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament. The first one is in **Amos 3:7**. “Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.”

God spoke through Amos here and said that all the evils threatened upon Israel would surely come, but not without Him first warning the people through the prophets. You see; the mercy of God is shown by the fact that He doesn't bring His judgments upon men until He first warns them through His prophets. He predicts the evil to come in hopes that He might not have to inflict it. For example, before the Lord brought the plagues upon Egypt He warned Pharaoh through Moses, didn't He? Before the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, Jesus foretold the city's destruction, and those who listened and obeyed didn't lose

their lives. And it's the same in our day; before the 7 last plagues are poured out just prior to the second coming of Christ, God has instructed us through the prophecies of His Word; and prophecies always come through prophets and prophetesses. Amos has told us that God doesn't work in any other way! He will do nothing but He reveals his secrets unto His servants the prophets.

Now let's also take a look at **2 Peter 1:21**. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Do you know who the first prophet mentioned in the Bible was? It's quiz time. Who was the first prophet mentioned in the Bible? Turn with me to the book of Jude, that little book just before Revelation—only has one chapter; **Jude 14**. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,"

We don't have the book of Enoch today, and perhaps he didn't even write down his prophecies, but we know that he was one of God's prophets, perhaps the first one; at least the first one mentioned in the Bible. Enoch, you'll remember was Methuselah's daddy, and the Bible says that Enoch walked with God 365 years and he was not, for God took him. Enoch, and also Elijah, are examples and representatives of those who will be alive and translated without seeing death when the Lord comes. And so it would be a good idea for us to study about this godly man so we can learn how to develop a character like his, so when Jesus comes He'll also take us.

But there were also other antediluvian prophets! For example, before the flood Noah was God's spokesman, and after the flood, we find many prophets and prophetesses—including Anna, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the list goes on and on.

All of these people spoke for God. Sometimes God revealed His will to prophets and prophetesses by visions, sometimes by dreams, and sometimes through the Word of God from one prophet to another, but always through the Holy Spirit.

Notice what it says in **Numbers 12:6**. "And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream."

Sometimes God's messengers were instructed in a vision or a dream to speak to the people, and sometimes they were to write out a message from Him. In fact, the whole Bible is the product of the ministry of prophets. Every author was a part of God's plan. They all spoke or wrote for Him—moved, or 'carried along' by His Spirit, as it says in **2 Peter 1:21**.

You see, the Bible is God's love letter to His children on earth. It's His way of saying, "I want to keep in touch with you." And especially He wants you to know that He's looking forward to the time when you can have face-to-face communication once again! All the authors of the Bible wrote with this end in view.

And there were others besides those who actually wrote the New Testament who also spoke for God: men like Simon, Agabus, and Barnabas; and in **Acts 21:9** it says that Phillip had four daughters who prophesied. All of these people were instruments God used to reveal what He was like and also to encourage the early Christian church.

In fact, one of the main reasons Jesus came to earth was to demonstrate by word and action what God is really like. He was God's thought made audible. The world has never witnessed a more eloquent Communicator of God's love than Jesus! And because of that, even though more than 2,000 years have

passed since Calvary, millions of people still kneel at the foot of the cross and pledge undying allegiance and devotion to the Saviour of the world.

Listen to what Jesus did for His church when He returned to Heaven: **Ephesians 4:8, 11-14**. “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;”

Notice verses 12 and 13, it says these gifts were for the perfecting of the saints, “till we all come in the unity of the faith.” So let me ask you a question: Has God’s church all come into the unity of the faith? Absolutely not! And therefore the gifts—all the gifts—are still to be manifest in the church.

Also, did you notice where the gift of prophecy stands in the list of “spiritual gifts”? The gift of prophecy ranked second only to that of apostleship; it was a very important and necessary gift to help the church function properly.

The apostle Paul likened the gifts of the Spirit to the various parts of the human body. He showed that the eyes, head, mouth, and other body parts are all necessary for the body to function harmoniously and efficiently, and it’s the same with the church. Without vision, for example, the church would be blind! **Proverbs 29:18** says, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

“But,” you might be thinking, “what happened to the gift of prophecy after Christ returned to heaven and all the apostles and prophets died?”

Well, sad to say, not many generations passed until the church became careless, compromising, and unfaithful to God and His Law.

In **Lamentations 2:9**, Jeremiah at one point records what happened when Israel apostatized. (Right after the book of Jeremiah. In fact, Jeremiah wrote it.) Speaking of Jerusalem, Jeremiah says, “Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and broken her bars: her king and her princes are among the Gentiles: the law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the LORD.”

As the early church adopted pagan rites and practices and discarded the fundamental truths of the Bible, one by one the spiritual gifts were withheld. That’s why there’s a 400-year gap between the Old and New Testaments! You see, God isn’t going to bless His professed people with the gift of prophecy – or any other gift – when they’re being disobedient to His commandments! He may use individuals to warn and correct for a time, but there comes a point when God stops talking. But here’s what we need to understand; according to Bible prophecy God said He would speak again “at the time of the end,” and this is what we need to find out about today.

During the time of the New Testament church’s apostasy, which led to the Dark Ages, Bibles were chained to monastery pulpits, and the common people were forbidden to own or even read the Scriptures. Only priests were allowed to read and interpret the Bible. However, a few Christians tenaciously held on to what Bibles they had, and despite persecution, they carried on missionary work and shared what portions of the Scriptures they had. And as a result, these courageous souls planted the seeds of the

Reformation long before Wycliffe, Luther, Huss, and some of the better known reformers came upon the scene.

When Wycliffe, Luther, and others translated the Bible into the common tongue of the people and secretly distributed them, the persecution that followed only served to whet the appetite for God's Word. And as people began to diligently search the Scriptures they had, old truths obscured for centuries began to surface. And as these truths were brought to the attention of the people, a great religious awakening illuminated the world. And by the mid-1800s, the long absent gift of prophecy was restored to God's people.

About this time there came into being a new religious movement—some Baptists, some Methodists, some Presbyterians, and many others from different churches, began searching the Scriptures and praying for light. And as they searched the Bible, they saw in God's fourth commandment the great memorial of His creation—a day God asked His people to “remember.”

And as they read the Book of Revelation they saw the description of God's last-day people. We read this last time, but because it's so important we better read it again—**Revelation 14:12**. “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

As these people read and studied, God impressed them that keeping His commandments involved keeping the Bible Sabbath also. Not just nine commandments—but all ten!

They not only acted on the old light they had newly rediscovered, but they immediately launched a Sabbath reform, bringing in both a knowledge of the Bible Sabbath and the work of Jesus as our great High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

It's amazing to me that many Christians today have no idea what happened to Jesus after He ascended to heaven. What is He doing up there? Well, I'll tell you friends, in case you've never heard this before: There's a Sanctuary in heaven that was the pattern for the earthly sanctuary the children of Israel built in the wilderness. And if you'll study about that, you'll find out what Jesus has been doing up there for the past 2,000 years! He's our great High Priest! He's the mediator between God and a man and without His current ministry for us up there, we're lost! His sacrifice on the cross was important, and is the pivotal point of the plan of salvation, but without His ministry for us in the Heavenly Sanctuary where He applies the blood He shed in our behalf, His death alone cannot atone for our sins. The intercession of Christ in our behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He only began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. Anyway, this is a subject we don't have time to elaborate on this morning, but please study it out for yourself, you'll be glad you did.

As the seventh-day Sabbath was restored, guess what? The missing spiritual gift, the gift of prophecy, was also restored, because people weren't just keeping 8 or 9 of the commandments any more, but all 10. Isn't it reasonable to conclude that God might have something to say to this generation? Might God in His love for us today also want to keep in touch with us through a last-day prophet? It only seems reasonable, doesn't it?

In fact, the Bible said that this would be the case as we draw close to the end of time. Let's take a look in the book of Joel. Again, Joel is one of the minor prophets toward the end of the Old Testament, just before Amos that we read earlier. **Joel 2:28-32**. “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those

days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.”

And so this prophecy had a partial fulfillment in the New Testament as God spoke through prophets and prophetesses. But it also has an application for these last days.

Notice that God said this would take place just prior to the “great and terrible day of the Lord”—or just before the coming of Christ the second time. And notice also that this would happen to “the remnant whom the Lord shall call.” This would be the same remnant we read about earlier in [Revelation 12:17](#).

And so, the Bible teaches that God’s people are to have the renewed gift of prophecy during the closing hours of this earth’s history. And writing to the church at Corinth Paul made an interesting statement concerning those who were waiting for Jesus to return. [1 Corinthians 1:4-8](#). “I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.” What is the testimony of Christ? It is the spirit of prophecy. Verse 7: “So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

And so, here the apostle Paul very clearly says that the church in the last days was to come behind in no gift, and that would include the gift of prophecy.

In [Revelation 12:17](#) we’ve already discovered that the people of God’s last day church will keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus. In other words, the testimony of Jesus is the witness of Jesus through the prophetic gift—just as in days of old, and [Revelation 14:12](#) backs this up. And so, the bottom line is this—God still wants to “keep in touch.” He has something to say to **this** generation, and not just those who lived thousands of years ago!

But what about the possibility of deception? How can we tell the difference between true and false prophets? Because Jesus gave us warning about this in Matthew chapter 7. Let’s take a look at that—[Matthew 7:15](#). Notice, Jesus said, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” Go also to chapter [24:11](#) where Jesus says, “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.”

The truth is, the possibility of deception has always existed. All through history there have been true and false prophets. But we don’t have to be concerned about the false ones, if we know how to recognize the true ones. And we talked a little bit about this last time when I told you how experts detect counterfeit money. They don’t waste their time studying every counterfeit that comes along, but they study the real thing in depth, and then when they see a counterfeit they can tell right off that it’s not genuine. And so if we know our Bibles well, we too will be able to detect the false when we see it.

The Bible has some very stringent qualifications and distinct characteristics that pointedly mark the true prophet, and this morning I want to take a look at just five of these points; there are more the five, but by knowing these five, you’ll be able to detect the true from the false.

Well, maybe before we talk about the five points it might be a good idea to tell you about three other points that most people have never heard of. Did you know that the Bible teaches that true prophets don't blink their eyes, or breathe, and that they have supernatural strength while in vision? We won't take the time to read about them this morning, but I'll give you the references so you can look it up later:

- Daniel 10, 17, 18
- Numbers 24:4, 16

OK, here are the five main points:

1. **A TRUE PROPHET'S MESSAGE WILL ALWAYS BE IN HARMONY WITH GOD'S WORD.** Notice what it says in **Isaiah 8:20**. "To the law and to the testimony:" The law here is speaking about the Pentateuch—1st 5 books of Bible. And the very heart of the Pentateuch is the 10-commandment law. And so God is telling us here "To the law (especially the 10-commandment law), and to the testimony (of all the rest of the prophets): if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." And of course, "This word" is the Bible! In other words, a true prophet does not prophesy of movie stars or frivolous things like you might see in the tabloids in the checkout stands.
2. **WHATEVER PREDICTION A TRUE PROPHET MAKES, IT WILL COME TO PASS:** **Jeremiah 28:9** "The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the LORD hath truly sent him." And so the predictions of a true prophet **must** come to pass 100% of the time or he is a false prophet.
3. **A TRUE PROPHET WILL EDIFY, OR BUILD UP THE CHURCH:** **1 Corinthians 14, 3, 4** "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification (building up), and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church." And so a true prophet will build up the church.
4. **A TRUE PROPHET WILL EXALT CHRIST AS THE SON OF GOD:** **1 John 4:1-3** "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."
I think we covered this in a previous sermon, but when the apostle John uses the word "flesh" he's talking about fallen flesh. It's the Greek word "sarx." It means "human nature with its frailties and passions, fleshly, or carnal." And the word fleshly, or carnal embraces the lower or corrupt nature. And every time this word is used in the New Testament, it means the same thing except for a couple other instances where it's talking about animal flesh and those texts are very easy to detect. And so a true prophet will exalt Jesus Christ as the Son of God who came in fallen human flesh. He had a nature like ours, friends. Don't let anybody tell you differently. If they do, then they are one of these "spirits" that the apostle John warns against.
5. **A TRUE PROPHET WILL BEAR GOOD FRUIT:** **Matthew 7:15-18** "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." And so here Jesus likens people to trees, just as a good tree brings forth good fruit, so a spokesman for God will bring forth good fruit or good deeds, or will produce a good work.

Bases on all these texts, it becomes quite obvious that not everyone who professes to be a prophet of God is a true prophet. So no matter who claims to speak for God, we must apply these tests! If they fit, thank God! But if they don't, then we must follow Christ's warning to "beware."

So now that we know what some of the main tests of a true prophet are, let me share with you the story of how God chose to keep in touch with a group of faithful souls during the time I mentioned earlier, when they were discovering truths that had been buried under the rubbish of human tradition and falsehood for centuries.

It was the time of a Great Religious Awakening in the 1830s and 40s. As you research and read about what was happening during those years, you'll discover that it was a time of tremendous interest in Bible study and prayer. The prophecies of Daniel and Revelation held special interest, and the Millerites (followers of a man named William Miller, a Baptist preacher) studied these prophecies, especially **Daniel 8:14** where it speaks of a 2300 year time prophecy. And they eventually came to the conclusion that Jesus would come at the fulfillment of that prophecy, and the world would end October 22, 1844.

However, October 22 came and went, and the glorious return of Jesus didn't take place, and it was a very bitter disappointment for the "Millerites." But later, after much prayer and further Bible study, the group discovered that the date, indeed, was correct—but the event was wrong. You see, they thought that the "sanctuary" mentioned in Daniel 8:14 was the earth. But instead of the earth being cleansed by fire, as they believed would happen, it was the sanctuary in heaven that was to be cleansed, and that involved the blotting out of the sins of the righteous in preparation for the second Advent.

And I know I'm moving kind of fast through these details, and perhaps we'll have the opportunity to study more about what's known as the "investigative judgment" at a later time, but needless to say, the "Millerites" were crushed, and their disappointment seemed unbearable. But you know what? A loving God never forsakes the sincere seeker for truth, and He didn't forsake these "advent" believers at this moment of crises in their lives. And friends, He won't forsake you either if you have a desire to know the truth for this time. If you will accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme in your life, you'll find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before your feet. That's God's promise!

So, at this most crucial moment in the lives of the Advent believers back then, when most of their neighbors were ridiculing them and making fun of them after Jesus didn't come when they expected, God didn't allow things to progress much further before restoring the gift of prophecy to His people who were doing their best to make sense of their great disappointment.

It's a fascinating story from the start! A young girl by the name of Ellen Harmon was given her first vision soon after the Great Disappointment in December of 1844. She was shown the advent people traveling a narrow pathway to heaven with a brilliant light illuminating their pathway. And as you can imagine, this was quite an encouragement to this small and scattered group of believers, because it was proof to them that they were on the right track and God had not forsaken them.

For more than 70 years, Ellen spoke, wrote, and taught, and she counseled for God. Although the scope of her ministry is extraordinary, her greatest work, as she put it, was "to lead men and women to the 'greater light'"—that is, to Jesus and His Word.

In a book she wrote titled *Colporteur Ministry*, page 125 she said this, "Little heed is given to the Bible and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the 'Greater Light.'"

She taught that the Bible was the final court of appeal in all doctrinal questions. And to some who were criticizing the Word of God during her day, she wrote the following in another book titled *Selected Messages, book 1, pg. 18*. She said this, “Cling to your Bible as it reads and stop your criticism in regard to his validity and obey the word, and not one of you will be lost.”

What timely advise for us today! There are so many who want to argue this point or that point, but the way of salvation is so clear that none will be lost who will ask for the Holy Spirit and obey what’s revealed to them, it’s that simple. Cling to your Bible as a revelation from God and do what it says and you will be saved. End of story!

No other woman author has ever produced as much published religious material as Ellen did in books, magazine articles, tracts, pamphlets, and personal letters of counsel, advice, and reproof. Her writings include counsel on victorious Christian living, diet, health, prenatal care, drugs, marriage and the home, child guidance, education, and a whole lot more. And though many of her writings are now more than 100 years old, science is just now catching up with her!

Professors, doctors, news commentators, and others have quoted her as an authority in many of these fields. For instance, in 1864 Ellen wrote this, “Tobacco is a poison of the most deceitful and malignant kind. It is all the more dangerous because its effects upon the system are so slow and scarcely perceivable.”

Those in the medical field back then must have chuckled at this statement, because at that time it was thought that tobacco and cigar smoke was an effective cure of lung disease. But finally, nearly 100 years later in 1957, the American lung association concluded that smoking was a causative factor in lung cancer. And shortly afterward, warning labels began to appear on cigarette packages.

In 1906 Ellen wrote that there were cancerous “germs.” She said this in the book titled *Ministry of Healing, pg. 313*. “People are continuously eating flesh that is filled with tuberculosis and cancerous germs. Tuberculosis, cancer, and other fatal diseases are thus communicated.” Today it might be more accurate to use the word virus instead of germ. (However, both are disease-causing microorganisms).

Ninety-three years later, *Newsweek magazine, June 18, 1956*, carried a story titled, “Viruses are Activating Factors in Cancer”: “Doctor Wendell Stanley, University of California virologist, and Nobel Prize winner went so far as to state without qualification that he believes viruses cause most of all human cancer.”

In a manuscript Ellen wrote in 1902, she warned that the Lord would visit San Francisco and Oakland because they were becoming like “Sodom and Gomorrah.” Did this prediction come true? Absolutely! On April 18, 1906 at 5:12 in the morning the Great San Francisco Earthquake occurred, and the prophecy given four years before it happened proofed to be correct.

Most recently another of her predictions occurred on September 11, 2001, when the twin towers collapsed. Here’s what she said in a testimony she wrote in 1909, “On one occasion, when in New York City, I was in the night season called upon to behold buildings rising story after story toward heaven. . . The scene that next passed before me was an alarm of fire. Men looked at the lofty and supposedly fireproof buildings and said, ‘They are perfectly safe.’ But these buildings were consumed as if made of pitch. The fire engines could do nothing to stay the destruction.”

Right about now you may be wondering—who was Ellen Harmon, and what was she like? Well, the answer takes us back to November 26, 1826, during the presidency of John Quincy Adams. On that date,

twin girls—Elizabeth and Ellen—were born near the little village of Gorham, Maine, to Eunice and Robert Harmon. Ellen was the last of eight children, but at the age of nine an accident changed her life forever. While returning home from school, Ellen was seriously injured by a stone thrown by a classmate. For three weeks she was unconscious. She was unable to continue her schooling, and it appeared that she wouldn't live much longer. And as a result, she never got beyond the early grade of formal education.

But eventually she did regain her strength and became an avid student of the Bible. She attended camp meetings, revivals, and cottage meetings. After attending a Methodist camp meeting in Buxton, Maine, Ellen was baptized June 26, 1842 in the Atlantic Ocean and became a member of the Methodist church.

Later, Ellen and her family attended some meetings held in Portland, Maine, by William Miller, a former army captain turned Baptist preacher, who had been diligently studying Bible prophecy. And because he advocated the soon coming of Christ, he and his followers were labeled “Adventists.”

As they listened, the Harmon family was convinced of the truthfulness of Miller's messages. However, after the great disappointment of October 22, 1844, they too were devastated when Jesus didn't return, and Ellen's disappointment was no less because of her young age. Just like the rest, she wept, and prayed, and studied God's Word for an answer. Then it was that God called her to be His last day messenger to the remnant.

Physically, she didn't appear to be what you'd expect of a prophetess, a 17-year-old girl, fighting tuberculosis and a heart condition. But in December of 1844 (just a couple months after their disappointment), God chose to speak to Ellen in a vision. In her own words, she tells us her reaction, archived as **Letter 3, 1847**, “After I had the vision, and God gave me light, He bid me deliver it, but I shrank from it. I was young, and I thought they would not receive it from me.”

Although feeling inadequate and physically incapable of the responsibilities of this calling by God, in faith she accepted her call from God that would last her lifetime. A couple years later on August 30, 1846, Ellen married James White, a young Adventist preacher, and together they worked in sharing the light God gave them through Ellen's visions.

Four boys were born to Ellen and James: Henry, Edson, William, and Herbert, and after 35 years of marriage, on August 6, 1881, Ellen's husband, James, died in Battle Creek, Michigan. Standing by his graveside was Ellen pledging to press on in the work they both had sacrificed and relentlessly pursued all those years!

Some of Ellen's most beautiful and inspiring writings appeared after this date, as she worked without her husband for another 34 years. Her prophetic ministry took her to several countries—guiding, instructing, and counseling the believers as the Lord led her.

The life and labors of Ellen White closed on July 16, 1915, when she was 87 years of age, and she was buried at the side of her husband in Oak Hill Cemetery in Battle Creek, Michigan.

I've been to that cemetery, and I've looked upon her family plot and other of the pioneer Advent believers that labored with her for the salvation of souls. And as I stood there, I thought about how interesting it would be to be there on resurrection morning to see some of those who blazed the trail before us as they come forth from their dusty beds to meet the Lord in the air. But even if we're not there to see it, we'll be able to meet them in heaven and visit with them, and I hope you'll be there, too.

A few weeks after her death, a newspaper carried this statement: “She showed no spiritual pride, and she sought no filthy lucre. She lived the life and did the work of a worthy prophetess, the most admirable of the American succession.” **The New York Independent, August 23, 1915**

Today her voice is stilled and her pen is at rest, but the priceless words of counsel, admonition, instruction and encouragement will continue to guide God’s people to final victory!

Her legacy to the world is a message to earth from across the universe, from a God of love who still wants to “keep in touch” with His children until Jesus comes.

You see, God wanted to make certain that those living in the last hours of earth’s history would not be overcome by the darkness and deception that would cause all the world to wonder after the Beast as it says in **Revelation 13:3**.

Listen to what Paul said about the gift of prophecy in **1 Corinthians 1:4-8**. “I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We read that scripture earlier, but I wanted to read it again so that you will know without question that the testimony of Christ was to be confirmed to God’s church until the end.

Also in 2 Chronicles 20:20 we’re given some important admonition. This was written during a time when the small tribe of Judah was about to be attacked by a great multitude of their enemies. **2 Chronicles 20:20** “And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, and so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so ye prosper.” That counsel is just as good for us today as it was for the children of Judah back then.

Friends, I can testify to you today that I have read Sister White’s writings (as she’s affectionately called), and I’ve compared them to the Bible for close to forty years—and the only conclusion I can come to is that she was indeed a lesser light leading to the greater light. I cannot express to you how much I’ve been blessed from reading what God inspired her to write, and I hope you’ll check it out for yourself. You don’t have to read what she wrote in order to find salvation, but I can tell you that if you take the time to read what she has written, you will be drawn to Jesus and gain a clearer knowledge of the truth for these last days of earth’s history; and who among us couldn’t benefit from that? And besides, if God didn’t think we needed some special guidance in these last days, He wouldn’t have told the apostle John to write what he did in **Revelation 12:17**.

Because according to that Scripture the prophetic gift was restored to the right people, in the right place, and at the right time. And if you want to be one of those who will welcome the Lord when He comes, you **must** be a part of God’s last day church, remembering that the church is not a building or a religious organization, but a people that love God and keep His commandments.

This group of Advent believers that developed in the mid 1800s and on into the 20th and 21st century is today known as the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, which in the beginning was faithful to the teachings that came through God’s gift to Ellen. But I have to be honest with you and tell you the sad truth; over the years the denomination has turned its back on much of the council and teachings of the Spirit of Prophecy and is today in the same condition as all the rest of the apostate churches of Christendom. That’s why many of those that were once members of the Seventh-day Adventist

denomination have severed their connection and now meet in small groups, and home churches, and in many cases, all by themselves. And I'll tell you, making the decision to leave that church after so many years of loyal service has been one of the most difficult decisions I've ever had to make, but I have no regrets, because today I am free in Christ and not held corporately responsible for what they're doing as I once was when I was a member. And so, this might be something you may want to consider if you are a member of a church that's not following all the truth that God has so graciously revealed in these last days. And really, it's no different than what God's people in the past have experienced over and over again through the centuries.

At one time Israel was God's true church, but when they rejected and crucified Christ, those who were faithful left the Jewish synagogue and joined the Christian church that began meeting, guess where? In small groups and home churches. But eventually as the Christian church centered in Rome grew, it too gradually compromised the truth and the faithful had to leave, and once again begin meeting in small groups and home churches. Then as that movement grew, the Protestant Reformation developed, and eventually it, too, split into many different factions, because they brought with them much of the baggage from the Church of Rome and were unwilling to give it up. Then the Great Advent Awakening of the 1800s we've been talking about developed and grew and prospered up to a certain point, and here we are once again, meeting in small groups, and home churches, and in some cases, all alone.

But here's the point, and please don't miss it! **It's not going to happen again!** The cycle that has repeated itself over and over again through history is not going to continue on. This is it! Don't look for another denomination to develop, or for some God ordained mega church organization to pop up. It's not going to happen! According to what we read in **Revelation 12:17** we are living during the time of the remnant church, and there's nothing to follow! The remnant is a small piece at the end of the roll, and it's this remnant that will actually keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy. The word "have" in this verse doesn't mean you have it on your bookshelves collecting dust, or that you have copyright to it; but that you have it in your heart, that you hold to it, that you obey it. This is the remnant that will be delivered at the second coming of Christ, and not the nominal professors who claim to be the remnant.

And so, the Advent movement that began over 180 years ago is going to continue on to the end, but it's not going to be the way the majority thinks it's going to be. God's faithful people have always been a small company, a little flock, and the Good Shepherd knows who are His, and He's going to gather them together from every Babylonian church real soon and take them to the land of promise. This world, dear friends, is waxing old like a garment that's about ready to fall apart. If you're listening to the news you know that it's true. Never has there been such unrest, and corruption, and moral decline, and wickedness; and the sad part is, it's going to get worse before the Lord comes, not better.

We're getting very close to the time that Jesus spoke of in **Matthew 24:31** where it says He's going to "send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather His elect from the four winds," that is, from every direction; because you see, God has people in all the various churches. But as the message of **Revelation 18:1-5** is heard and obeyed, God's people will leave the fallen churches and join the remnant that keep all the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. I hope you'll be one of them.

[Prayer]