

THE LESSER LIGHT

By Pastor Stephen Bohr

Introduction: The story of “**What Jesus Said.**”

- ❑ Present the full SDA message from the Gospels and the book of Acts
 - ❑ Because many say they are New Testament Christians
 - ❑ Finding all our teachings was actually quite easy, except one: The gift of prophecy. After much prayer and reflection on the Word of God, I finally found the key and I want to share it with you today.
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Let’s begin our study with **John the Baptist:**

- ❑ John was *asked if he was a prophet* and he said no (John 1:19-26). If not a prophet, then what was he? Luke 7:27: He was the *messenger of the Lord* (see also, Malachi 3:1).
- ❑ John the Baptist had the *testimony of Jesus* (John 5:31-33; 1:15).
- ❑ John the Baptist was *more than a prophet* (Luke 7:26).
- ❑ John denied that he was *the light* (*phos*; John 1:6-8). His purpose was to bear witness to the light. Yet Jesus called John a bright and shining light (*luchnos*: portable lamp or candle; John 5:35). In other words, John was a **lesser light** which was to lead men and women to the **greater light**—Jesus Christ (see **John 5:36** where Jesus actually uses the word “greater” to refer to Himself).
- ❑ But notice that the **Scriptures also** gave witness to Jesus (**John 5:39**). Thus there are **two sources** which testify of Jesus: John the Baptist and the written Scriptures of the Old Testament. There was a **canonical** and a **non-canonical** source to give witness to Jesus.
- ❑ The **question** immediately suggests itself: Why did the people need a non-canonical source if they had the written Scriptures of the Old Testament? Or, even further, why would they even need a lesser light if they would soon have the **greater light** in their midst? The answer is actually quite simple: The people had fallen into **gross darkness**

and gone astray because of their **neglect of the Scriptures** during the **Inter-testamental period**. All kinds of false teachings and practices came in during this period (John 1:5; Isaiah 60:1-2) They therefore needed a lesser light to draw attention to the greater light *Give the illustration of the light switch in the **tape room**. A **flashlight** led to the light switch.*

- ❑ The role of John was not to bring in **new light** but rather to turn the attention of the people to the **light already given**. He was to **awaken interest** in the study of Old Testament prophecy. In other words, the role of John was *complementary* to Scripture, not *supplementary*.
- ❑ You see, those who **claimed to be God's people** and boasted at **having the Old Testament** were **violating every principle** of the Word of God. They professed to be **waiting** for the Messiah. They **professed** to love God. They **claimed to have a close relationship** with Him and yet they crucified Christ because they misunderstood the Old Testament and rejected the clarification given by the lesser light.
- ❑ We can imagine the Jews saying, "**We have Moses**," but they did not understand or practice the teachings of Moses. They boasted of their knowledge of the Scriptures and yet did not understand them at all. John was called to attract attention to the Word already given. (at this point, study carefully with the congregation, **John 5:39-40, 45-47**). I am of the firm belief that *If the Jews had understood and obeyed the writings of Moses, John would never have been raised up by God!!!*
- ❑ John **lighted up the Old Testament prophecies** about the Messiah. He presented Jesus as the **Lamb** of God, a clear reference to the **sanctuary** sacrifice and **Isaiah 53**. He took from the Old Testament and showed how it was being fulfilled in Jesus. He exalted the Old Testament and made it vivid, alive and **present truth**. He rebuked, reprovved, was a **fly** in the ointment, a **pain** in the neck, a **speck** in the eye. He was **no pushover** (see Matthew 11:7-8)
- ❑ The role of John was to **prepare** a people for the first coming of Jesus (Luke 1:17). By **revival** (repentance) and **reformation** (bearing fruit) the people were to wait expectantly for their **bridegroom**. John was the **liaison** or **go-between**, between Jesus Christ (the groom) and Israel (the bride). He was to prepare the way for the wedding (**John 3:28-30**). In New Testament times, the friend of the bridegroom was responsible for making all the **preparations** for the wedding so that all was **ready** when the groom should come. The friend of the bridegroom was not to take the glory for himself. The **glory was for the groom** who was marrying the bride. The best man does not want all eyes centered on himself at the wedding. **He decreases so that the**

bridegroom can increase! In other words, he blends into the woodwork so that all can see the bridegroom.

- ❑ The Old Testament had **prophecies** about the coming of the bridegroom to marry his bride. The **matchmaker** (John the Baptist) has come to set up all the arrangements. Yet the bride rejected her husband. By rejecting the work of the **matchmaker**, they rejected the bridegroom as well. Let's see how John the Baptist was treated.

Matthew 11:18: He was accused of having a devil.

Luke 7:29-30: He was rejected by the leaders, especially.

Matthew 17:12-13: They **knew Him not** (same expression as John 1:10-11). Because they did with John as they pleased, they also did with Jesus as they pleased. And these were the people who claimed to go by the Scriptures!! By rejecting the lesser light, they rejected the greater light!!

- ❑ Prophets are not **omniscient** or **infallible**. They were **human**. They **grew** in their understanding of truth. John, for example, thought there would only be one coming of the Messiah (**Matthew 3:7, 10, 12**). When Jesus did not appear to measure up to his preaching, he sent a message to Jesus asking whether He was the one to come or whether they should expect another (**Matthew 11:1-3**). Was **John a false prophet** because he did not fully understand the work of the Messiah? Was his work as a prophet any less trustworthy because his knowledge and understanding were limited? After Jesus healed the sick, etc., John finally understood!!

Now let's turn at the life and work of Ellen G. White:

- ❑ Ellen White preferred *not to be called a prophet*, she claimed to be the *Messenger of the Lord* (ISM 32)
- ❑ Ellen White had the *Testimony of Jesus* (Revelation 12:17; 19:10; 22:9).
- ❑ The work of Ellen White was far *greater than that of a conventional prophet* (ISM 32, 34, 36).
- ❑ Ellen White was a *lesser light* to lead men and women to the greater light, Jesus Christ"

“Little heed is given to the Bible and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light.” (3 SM 30).

“The religion of the Jews, in consequence of their departure from God, consisted mostly in ceremony. John was the lesser light, which was to be followed by a greater light. He was to shake the confidence of the people in their traditions, and call their sins to remembrance, and lead them to repentance; that they might be prepared to appreciate the work of Christ.” (Review and Herald, volume 41, number 17, April 8, 1873).

- ❑ As with John, two sources give witness to Jesus, **one canonical** (the Bible) and the other **non-canonical** (the writings of Ellen G. White). As with John, the purpose of her writings is to bring attention to the **written Scriptures** which had been trampled upon and misinterpreted during the *dark ages*. If God’s people had studied the Word of God with the sincere desire to obey it, Ellen White would never have been called by God. (*AT THIS POINT, READ, TESTIMONIES, VOLUME 2, P. 665*).
- ❑ **Why Ellen White if we have the Bible?** For the same reason that the Jews needed John even though they had the Old Testament. They did not **understand or obey it so God, in His mercy, gave them a helping hand by simplifying and amplifying the truths already given**. Ellen White is not a source of new light but rather one who amplifies and simplifies the old light. Example of the **talk show in Albuquerque**.
- ❑ Around the same time and place that God raised up Ellen White, another person also arose who claimed to be a prophet. He purportedly found some gold plates in **Palmyra, New York** written in ancient **Egyptian** which he translated into English. This document is known as *The Book of Mormon*. This book is referred to as “**another Testament of Jesus Christ**.” [why not in contemporary English and why no manuscript trail?] It is considered a **supplement** to the Word of God (along with the *Pearl of Great Price* and *Doctrine and Covenants*). In other words, they unapologetically affirm that these books contain truths which cannot be found in the Bible.
- ❑ When the Latter Day Saints pay a visit, their **first task** is to try and convince the prospective student that **Joseph Smith** was a true prophet. As the studies continue, the Book of Mormon and the Bible are used together.
- ❑ With Seventh-day Adventist the process is **reversed**. The student is taught the truth from Scripture alone and once all the doctrines have been clearly presented from Scripture, then the Spirit of Prophecy is presented last as a **complement** (not **supplement**) of the Bible. This is not done because the Spirit of Prophecy is of

secondary importance but rather because the function of the writings of Ellen White is not to supplement Scripture but rather to complement it! Ellen White **magnifies, explains, amplifies simplifies and highlights** the great truths of Scripture but does not add any new truth!! Ellen White is like a **telescope** or a microscope. The telescope does not create stars but rather helps us see them more clearly.

- ❑ Is it just possible that many in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today who say: “**I don’t need Ellen G. White, because I have the Bible,**” are really violating every principle of God’s holy Word? The fact is that Ellen G. White is despised by many within the church as much as was John the Baptist. In some churches, when Ellen White is quoted, certain members cringe but they don’t mind if Max Lucado or Martin Luther are quoted.
- ❑ Former pastors write books such as *The White Lie* and *Ellen G. White: Prophetess of Health* and certain **internet sites** (for example **amalgamation**) sites lambast Ellen White with vitriolic hatred, all under the pretense that because we have the Bible, we do not need Ellen G. White!! Sounds familiar, doesn’t it? Ellen White foresaw all of this. Notice her words in **II SM 48**. If this is Satan’s very **last deception**, then we must be close to the end because we are seeing this hatred now!!
- ❑ I found out something long ago and it is this: I never form an opinion of a person or a church on the basis of what its **enemies say** (because the enemies **distort** what they believe) or even on the basis of what their **friends say** (because they often **embellish** the truth). For example, many say we teach that Satan is our Savior because of the scapegoat theology. But any impartial and fair observer will see that Azazel bears sins which have previously been forgiven in the sanctuary. Others teach that EGW believed that we are saved because we keep the Sabbath, clearly a false statement!! If you want to know the truth about Ellen White, **go directly to the source, read her writings for yourself**. Get your information first hand!!
- ❑ The fact is that God has raised up Ellen White to **prepare God’s people for the Second Coming** as John was to prepare a people for the first coming. Will there be as few faithful ones prepared for the Second Coming as there were for the first coming? The book *The Great Controversy* is meant to map out all the dangers we must face as we prepare to enter the heavenly Canaan. Ellen White describes a group of Adventist who are found without shelter in the time of trouble. Notice, in her own words, the reason why: Read II SM 40.
- ❑ Ellen White was **not perfect**, nor **omniscient** nor **infallible**. She made **mistakes** (for example, the shut door). She **grew in her understanding** of truth as she progressed in

her ministry (Spiritual Gift, Spirit of Prophecy, **Conflict Series**). Does this make her less than a trustworthy prophet? If it does, then John the Baptist was in the same boat!

- ❑ Final Objections: Can a woman be a prophet? Wasn't John the last prophet? (John 11:13).
- ❑ Ellen White's profound comprehension of prophecy:

Jesus changing His garments

The identity of the little book

What knowledge is to be increased? (Evangelists)

Iron and Clay

Order of Events of Daniel 11

How she matter of fact explains the **beast**, the **false prophet**, the **wine**, the **mark**, the **seal**, etc.

Ellen White wrote on a broad range of subjects. Our institutions and our personal lives would be far better if we followed her counsel in the following books:

Medical (MH, CH, CDF, MM)

Educational (ED, FCE)

Publishing (CM)

Administration of the work (TM)

Ministerial (GW)

Evangelism (EV)

Theology (Conflict Series)

Home and Marriage (AH)

Devotional life (DA)

Children (CG)

Finances (CS)

Health (MH, CH, CDF)

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